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ISSUE 200

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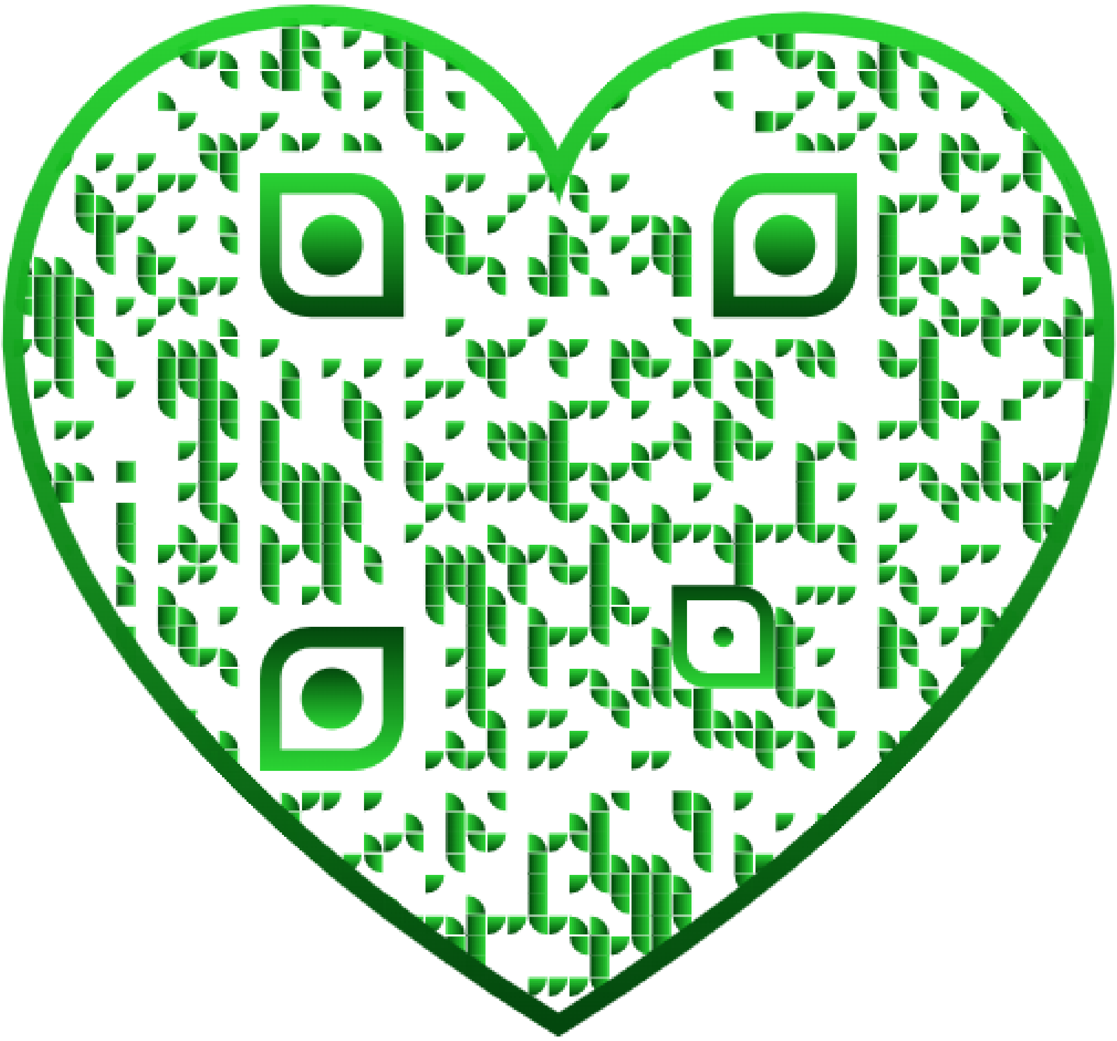

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Council for
British Archaeology

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Founded in 1944, the Council for British Archaeology promotes archaeology for all. It makes the case for safeguarding our archaeological heritage, and increasing public participation and understanding. It has a growing membership of individuals of all ages and over 600 organisations, and partnerships with Archaeology Scotland, CBA Wales/Cymru and CBA English Regional Groups. The CBA is an environmental charity registered in England & Wales (287815) and Scotland (sc041971), and a company limited by guarantee (1760254)

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From the editor

VOLTAGE TV

I always look forward to the start of the new year, it offers the promise of new experiences, knowledge, and the tantalising hints of longer, warmer days. This year it also brings the unexpected joy of guest-editing the next couple of editions of *British Archaeology*. A new experience for me and just as thrilling as uncovering a buried stone structure in a freshly excavated trench.

This is the 200th issue of *British Archaeology*, a milestone in print copy which showcases the ever-evolving, diverse offer of UK research, creative creation and participation in CBA's 80th anniversary year.

In recent years, archaeology has embraced the digital space, adopting innovation in technology and embedding it into every day archaeological practice. In this issue, the feature 'Adventures in AR' explores how archaeologists and communities are using Augmented Reality to add an extra dimension to the stories we tell about the people and environments of the past. Within this article we are pioneering a first for print archaeology, where an AR trigger is embedded into the model images on the page, offering our readers the chance to digitally visit buildings in the medieval cityscape of Southampton on their handheld devices.

We also feature the continuing work of the National Trust, custodians of hundreds of sites, and their management of historic and environmental places, ranging from houses, gardens, coastlines, and countryside. As with all issues we have archaeological news updates focusing on the recent discoveries, research, and accessible projects that have been happening around the UK.

Finally, we look at CBA's own pioneering project 'My Heritage' in partnership with Photoworks; and how eight, 16 to 25-year-olds, will develop and create a new body of artwork exploring contemporary archaeology and heritage.

We always look forward to hearing from our readers and future feature contributors if you have any thoughts, news items or ideas for articles do get in touch editor@archaeologyuk.org.

Raksha Dave

Radiocarbon dates
Unless otherwise noted, ^{14}C dates in *British Archaeology* are calibrated at 95% confidence (cal AD or cal BC, expressed as AD or BC), rounded out after Mook (1986). See Radio-carbon dating by M Christie *et al*, *WikiJournal of Science* (2018), DOI: 10.15347/wjs/2018.006

On the cover: Archaeologist Martin Papworth working on the fifth century mosaic at Chedworth Roman Villa, see pages 18-31, one of the recent discoveries that is helping us reimagine our historic landscapes

Credit: National Trust-Stephen Haywood

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FIRST SIGHT

A piece of a Samian ware dish showing the potter's mark excavated at Smallhythe

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/JAMES DOBSON

Celebrating the CBA Groups

As with the CBA itself, the network of CBA Groups also celebrated their 80th anniversary in 2024. Their origin can be found in the two meetings held in May and July 1943 at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London.

The first of these two meetings established the idea of setting up the Council of British Archaeology and the second served as a provisional meeting of the council.

The third item on the agenda of that provisional meeting concerned the creation of Regional Sections of the new council. The minutes of the meeting record the following resolution: 'Archaeological Societies to be invited to form themselves into regional groups'.

At first the groups were referred to by number: 1 for Scotland; 2 for Wales; 3 for Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and Westmorland; 4 for Yorkshire and so forth, with a total of 13 groups in all.

Over the years these numbers were replaced by names: CBA Scotland; CBA Wales; CBA North; CBA Yorkshire, for example. Each group was allowed to nominate three representatives on the General Council, except for Scotland and Wales which elected nine and six representatives respectively, totaling up to 48 representatives in total.

With the addition of up to 15 national organisations (including the National Museums, Society of Antiquaries London, Society of Antiquaries Scotland, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Royal Archaeological Institute, Royal Historical Society, and the Prehistoric Society), the General Council was a large body representing archaeology across the UK, and at a local level. Inviting organisations from Northern Ireland was also considered but it did not lead to a specific CBA group being created there.

ALL PHOTOS NEIL REDFERN/CBA

Over the years, the General Council of the CBA has changed considerably, notably in the early 1990s when membership was opened to individuals.

In 1998, CBA Scotland became an independent charity – The Council for Scottish Archaeology – and then, in 2004, a Scottish charitable limited company. In 2008, it changed its name to Archaeology Scotland.

As with Archaeology Scotland, most of the CBA Groups are now charities, wholly independent of the CBA, although the CBA supports their membership by enabling members to join a group when they take out a membership.

The groups lost their direct representation on the CBA's council when it was reconfigured in line with recommendations and advice from the Charity Commission.

While all members (individual and organisational) are still members of the CBA, the strategic oversight of the charity is led by our Board of Directors under our Chair of Trustees, Gail Boyle.

Adapting our governance structures remains an ongoing challenge, not least since the Covid pandemic and the move to hosting online AGMs. We will continue to run our AGMs online as attendance is much higher and we will also be looking to update our articles of association to support this.

The purpose of CBA Groups was to make themselves primarily responsible for dealing with local problems affecting archaeology, in co-ordination with the council.

The CBA council was tasked to 'deal with more general matters', such as: urging state support for large-scale excavations; strengthening of measures to look after historic monuments and antiquities; furthering and formulating measures to enlighten the public concerning the records and monuments

Top: GBA Groups Weekend attendees exploring the Stonehenge landscape next to the New King Barrows Group

Right: Windmill Hill looking east from the top of one of the internal barrows

Left: Stonehenge from Old King Barrow Group

ALL PHOTOS NEIL REDFERN/CBA

of the past; working for the recognition of archaeology in universities, schools, and adult education; and working with organisations seeking to foster the progress of museum activities.

At a grassroots level, the CBA continues to support the CBA Groups, their active network of organisations and their programme of activities (see link below for more details). Meeting more regularly in person, with events and activities, such as regular Groups Weekends, remains a priority.

The most recent Groups Weekend was hosted by CBA Wessex over the weekend of 13 and 14 September, which saw over 20 members from different groups come together to celebrate and reflect on the work of the CBA Groups. This was the first meeting of the groups in person since 2019.

When CBA Wessex offered to host the Groups Weekend and we confirmed we would visit Avebury and Stonehenge, I did not realise there was so much of the landscapes around both sites that I had not visited before.

Day one was an exploration of Avebury and Windmill Hill. I had never been to Windmill Hill before. Instead, all my previous visits had focused on Avebury, and the landscape to the east – Silbury Hill and the West Kennet Longbarrow.

Walking out of Avebury to the northwest, the gentle climb up to Windmill Hill was barely noticeable; however, when standing on top of one of the later barrows within the neolithic causewayed enclosure and looking back east towards Avebury, the features of the prehistoric landscape jumped out at me.

From the henge itself and the West Kennet Avenue to the West Kennet Long barrow, the whole landscape was crowned by the magnificence of Silbury Hill rising out of the chalk landscape – as majestic as it is enigmatic.

Day two was a journey around the Stonehenge landscape led by Julian Richards. Julian gave the group a talk during an evening reception the night before and his walk from Durrington Walls to Stonehenge via the Cursus monument, the Kings Barrow Groups and the Stonehenge Alignment was another first for me.

Approaching the landscape from this direction really brought to light why movement through these landscapes is so important – you cannot get the full picture by just visiting one point or site.

The different perspectives and stories of each element and how they can be drawn together are so powerful and highlight why the wider landscapes and context of our most famous sites deserve our attention.

In 2025, it will be the turn of CBA East to host the Groups Weekend. I have a long list of places I have not visited that I would love to, so hopefully I will see you there next year. ■

You can find out more about each of the CBA groups by going to our website.

https://www.archaeologyuk.org/discover/groups-and-societies.html

Left: The Heelstone at Stonehenge, lying at the end of the Avenue

Left: Avebury from the east looking west from the outer bank

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Left: Julian Richards talking about Stonehenge and its landscape

Obituary: Tim Darvill

Timothy Charles Darvill OBE, BA, PhD, DSc, MIfA, FSA, FSAScot, RPA, Professor of Archaeology at Bournemouth University has passed away, aged 66, after a short battle with cancer.

Tim was a huge part of both Bournemouth University and the wider heritage profession, helping to shape the relationship between archaeology and development for decades. He is probably best known to the public for his work on Stonehenge and its landscape, being the first to excavate inside the circle in over four decades, in 2008, as well as his survey work on the possible bluestone quarries in the Preseli Mountains of south west Wales.

In 2022, he was in the news for suggesting that the layout of Stonehenge indicated its use as a calendar and a monumental representation, in stone, of the solar year.

Born in Cheltenham in 1957, Timothy Charles Darvill was interested in archaeology from an early age, something he noted in his 1987 book *Prehistoric Britain*, which he dedicated to his parents, Michael and Winnie Darvill, "to help explain some of the ancient monuments they have seen on their holidays".

He worked on archaeological sites as a schoolboy and, aged 17, was supervising fieldwork for the Cirencester Excavation Committee.

He studied archaeology at Southampton University from 1976 to 1979, spending summers excavating on Neolithic sites in the Cotswolds. He published *The Megalithic Chambered Tombs of the Cotswold-Severn Region* in 1982, and received his PhD at Southampton, on 'The Neolithic of Wales and the mid-west of England', a year later.

Returning to Gloucestershire, Tim established his own archaeological consultancy, advising developers, local authorities and various government bodies. In 1989, he helped the Cirencester Excavation Committee reconstitute itself as the Cotswold Archaeological Trust, a limited company with charitable status, in which he was to later serve as chairman of the board of directors, from 1992 until his death.

MILES RUSSELL

Top: Tim Darvill during the 2008 Stonehenge excavation

In 1991, Tim was appointed as Chair of Archaeology at Bournemouth Polytechnic. As head of the Archaeology Group at Bournemouth, which became a university in 1992, he ran a Master's programme in Archaeology and Development and taught various undergraduate units on prehistory as well as directing the undergraduate summer training school for nearly 20 years.

In 1994, he won the multi-million pound contract to undertake the *Monuments at Risk Survey* for English Heritage. The results, which helped quantify the nation's archaeological resource, provided recommendations for monitoring future change and were published in 1998.

Later, he directed the English Heritage-funded *Archaeological Investigations Project*, which produced a comprehensive list of all field projects undertaken in England between 1990 and 2010.

His proudest achievement at Bournemouth, however, was undoubtedly the creation of the band 'The Standing Stones', formed with fellow archaeologists and academics, in which he played lead guitar. Their gigs were legendary, not least the set in the basement of the British Museum which brought Current Archaeology Live 2008 to a close.

Tim worked on a number of international archaeological projects, most notably in Germany, Malta, the Isle of Man, Russia, and the USA.

At the time of his death, he was still directing the excavation and survey of a previously untouched Neolithic long barrow at Sisters, Baunton, in Gloucestershire.

His output was prodigious, publishing over 200 journal papers and articles in his life, together with 20 books, including *Prehistoric Britain* (1987; 2nd edition 2010), *Prehistoric Gloucestershire* (1987), *Prehistoric Britain from the Air* (1996), *Long Barrows of the Cotswolds* (2004), *Stonehenge: the Biography of a Landscape* (2006), the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* (2010) and *Prehistoric Gloucestershire* (2nd edition, 2013).

He was elected to the Society of Antiquaries in 1988, serving as vice president from 2007-10. He was also vice president of the Royal Archaeological Institute, chairman of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a council member of the National Trust, and chairman of Cotswold Archaeology.

He was appointed OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2010 for services to archaeology. He is survived by his partner and fellow archaeologist, Caoimhe Irvine, whom he married in hospital shortly before his death. ■

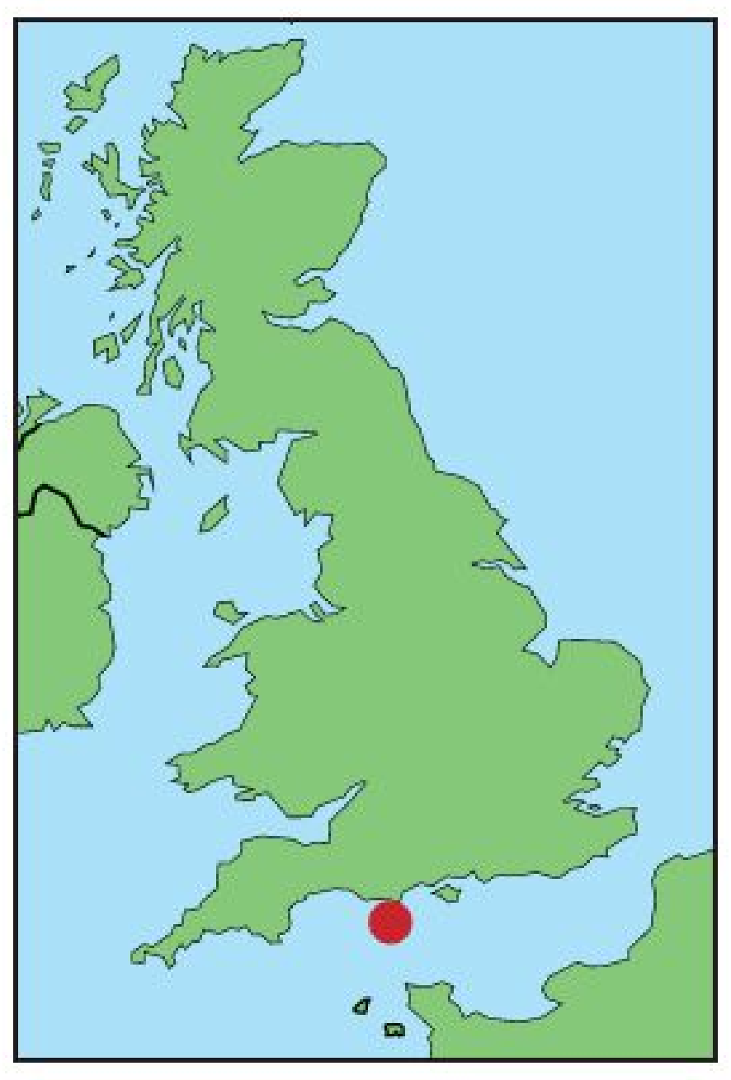
Miles Russell

Shipwreck mystery solved: Bournemouth University identifies historic 'Pin Wreck'

Maritime archaeologists from Bournemouth University have identified a shipwreck off Dorset's coast as a rare Admiralty mooring lighter, ending more than 30 years of speculation.

Originally discovered in 1990 near St Albans Head and known as the 'Pin Wreck' due to the hundreds of metal bolts found scattered around it, the vessel is now thought to be YC8, an Admiralty mooring lighter built in 1866 and likely used in the 1878 salvage operation of HMS *Eurydice* off the Isle of Wight.

Mooring lighters were towed service vessels designed for laying moorings and salvage operations, essential in port maintenance. The Pin Wreck, which lies at a depth of 27 metres and measures 24 metres in length, includes distinctive features such as a steam capstan at the stern, a steam engine, and Admiralty mooring buoys, chain, and anchors.



BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY [2]

Left: The anchor of the YC8 rests on the seabed off the coast of Dorset

The Bournemouth team, led by Professor of Maritime Archaeology Dave Parham, began investigating the wreck in 2019 after reviewing artefacts recovered from the site in the 1990s by former university employee Nigel Bryant. Among these artefacts was a ceramic fragment attached to a pulley block marked 'Portsmouth Dockyard', suggesting a Royal Navy connection.

The team's dive revealed a layout consistent with a mooring lighter, with artefacts indicating a mid-nineteenth century naval origin.

Further research at the National Archives uncovered plans for two identical lighters from Portsmouth Dockyard, YC5 and YC8, whose dimensions precisely matched those of the Pin Wreck, although there were no records of either vessel's loss.

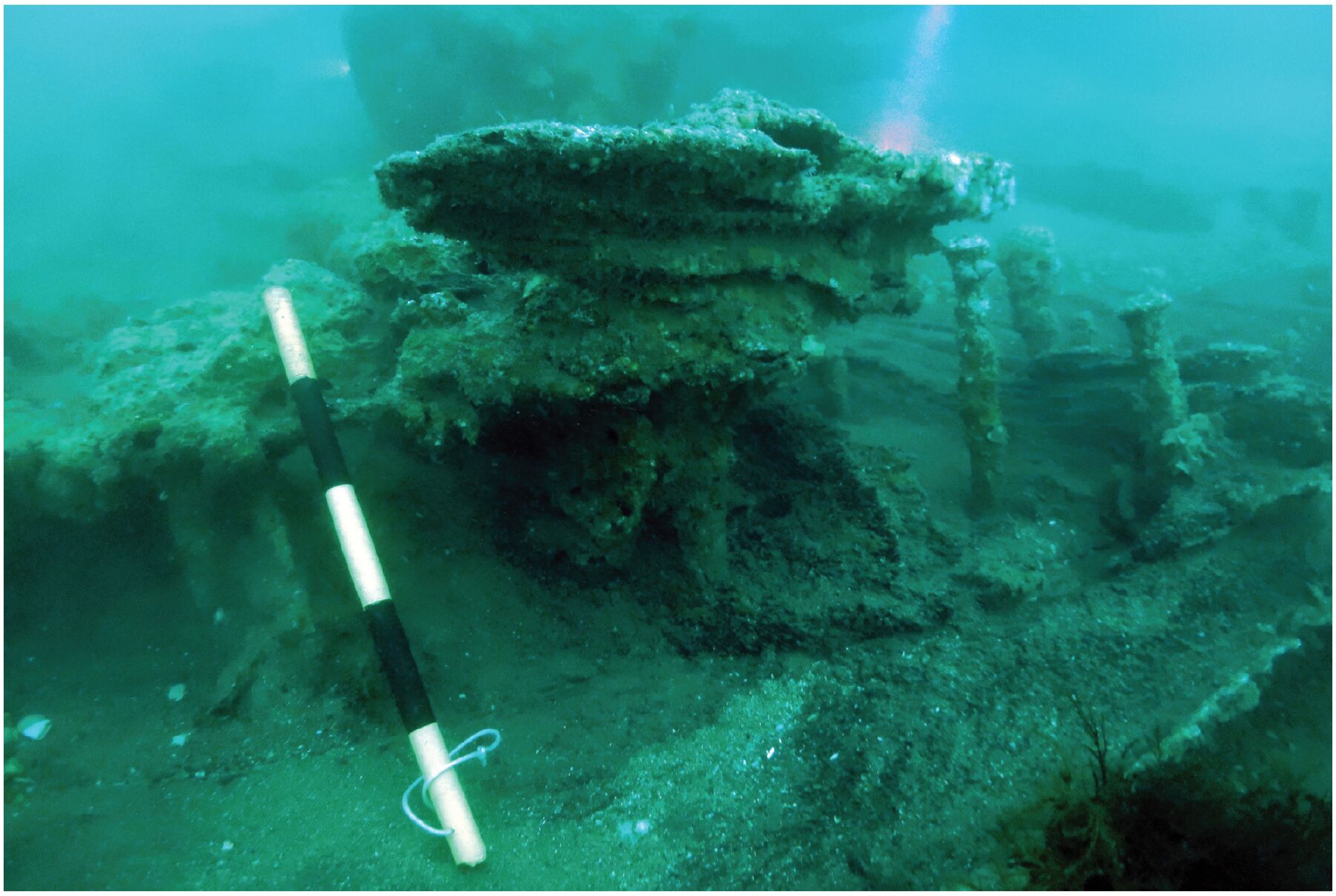
The breakthrough came with a report in a 1903 edition of the *Shipping Gazette* documenting the sinking of a mooring lighter off St Albans Head. In rough weather, 30 men had to transfer from the lighter to its tow vessel before it sank, confirming the identity of the wreck as YC8.

"This is a rare example of a type of service vessel which was essential for maintaining the operations of Britain's ports in the nineteenth century, so it is vital that we preserve it," said Parham.

"Its identity has remained a mystery for three decades, but what we observed on our dive meant we could find the clues that could reveal the secrets of the wreck and understand how it ended up on the seabed."

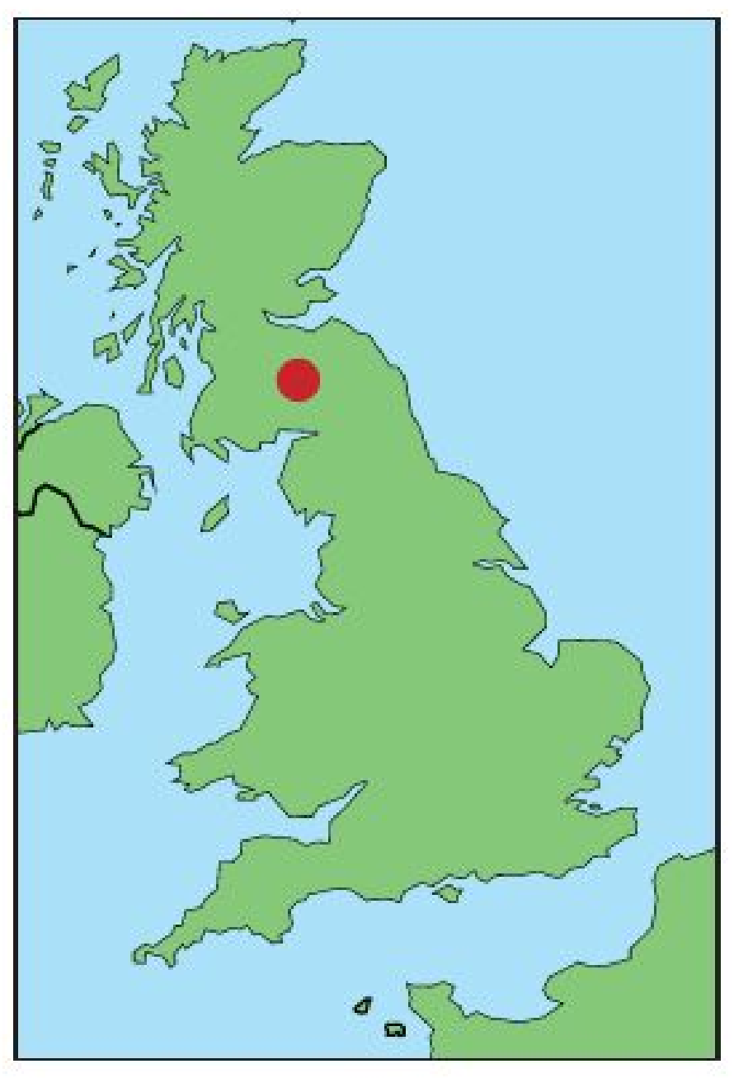
The team has since applied for the wreck to be designated as a protected site. Parham added: "The materials the vessel is made from suggest a high-quality build, possibly linked to a Royal dockyard.

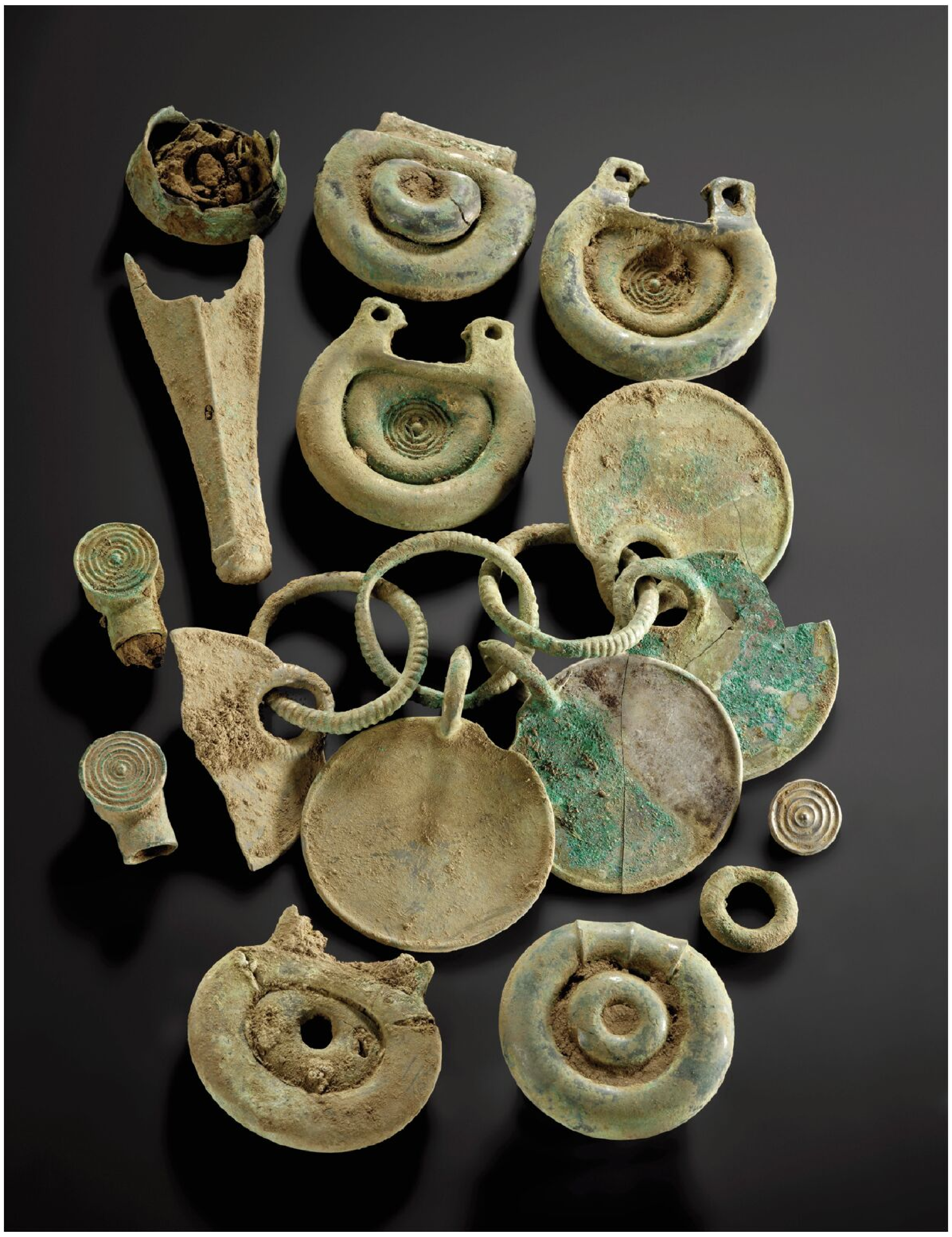
"The fact it appears to have been lost in service and was carrying substantial haulage equipment means it could offer valuable insight into the role these craft played in our maritime history." ■



Left: Bolts in situ on the wreck

National Museums Scotland acquires and conserves Bronze Age 'Peebles Hoard'





Right: A selection of Bronze Age bronze objects from the Peebles Hoard

NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

One of the most important finds in recent Scottish history, the Peebles Hoard, has been secured for the nation by National Museums Scotland.

Discovered in the Scottish Borders in 2020 by metal detectorist Mariusz Stępień, the Bronze Age hoard dates back 3,000 years and offers a rare glimpse into life in Scotland between 1000 and 800 BCE. The find comprises over 500 bronze and organic artefacts, many of which are unique to western Europe, underscoring the global significance of this discovery.

Allocated to National Museums Scotland through the Treasure Trove process, the hoard contains objects previously unknown in Bronze Age archaeology, including rattle pendants and unusual decorative pieces that hint at Scotland's connections across the North Sea. The two rattle pendants, the first found in Scotland, are similar to items found in Denmark, northern Germany, and northern Poland, suggesting Scotland's position within a broader international network of the time.

"The Peebles Hoard is exceptional, an utterly unique discovery that rewrites our understanding of both Bronze Age communities in Scotland and our prehistoric international connections," said Dr Matthew Knight, senior curator of Prehistory at National Museums Scotland. The hoard's preservation is unprecedented, with some artefacts still encased in wood and leather, including a sword in its wooden scabbard, intricate decorative straps, bronze buttons, and small studs.

The remarkable preservation of these items allows for insights rarely accessible in Bronze Age archaeology. To preserve the hoard's delicate components, National Museums Scotland is launching a fundraising campaign to support the costs of ongoing conservation and research.

After Stępień reported the find, a joint effort by the Treasure Trove Unit and National Museums Scotland ensured the careful removal of the hoard in a single block. The block was later CT-scanned at the University of Southampton's µ-VIS X-ray Imaging Centre. This scan revealed details of the artefacts' placement and showed that some pieces were made using the 'lost-wax casting' technique, among the earliest known examples of this method in Scotland.

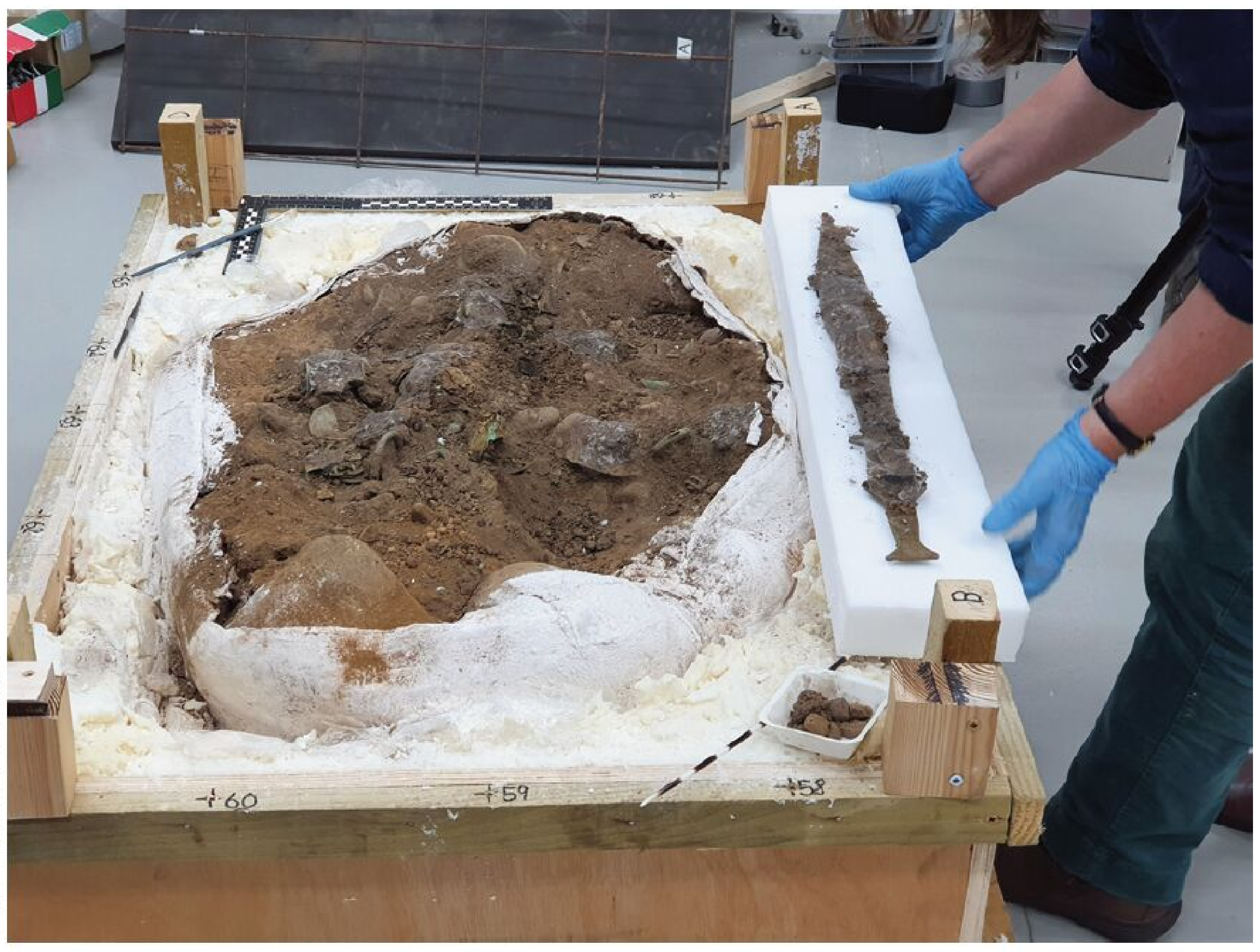
Professor Ian Sinclair, founder of the µ-VIS X-ray Imaging Centre, remarked: "CT scanning the hoard was certainly a big challenge due to the scale of the hoard block, but we relished the opportunity to bring our engineering skills to successfully support this research on such an exceptional historical find."

With ongoing research, conservators and archaeologists hope to uncover further details about the hoard, which could transform our understanding of Bronze Age Scotland and its connections with communities across Europe.

Dr Knight added: "More funding is critical to continue our conservation and research, to preserve the hoard for future generations and uncover the stories of Scotland's ancient past." ■

Right: Curator Dr Matthew Knight examining a bronze object from the hoard

NEIL HANNA



Below: The sword and scabbard excavated from the Peebles Hoard

CROWN COPYRIGHT

Chew Valley Hoard acquired for the nation

One of the most remarkable coin hoards has been acquired by South West Heritage Trust on behalf of Somerset Council for the Museum of Somerset thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Art Fund, Friends of the Museum of Somerset and Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

The hoard, containing 2,584 silver pennies (some cut as lower denominations) of Harold II and William I, was likely buried for safekeeping during the turmoil following the Norman Conquest. Documentary sources show that the South West was afflicted by rebellion against the Normans, with near contemporary accounts recording that 'Exeter was the first town to fight for its liberty' in early 1068.

Throughout the early years of the Norman Conquest of England – especially between 1066 and 1069 – William 'the Conqueror faced both internal and external threats to his rule, some more serious than others.

In the South West, certain rebellions are blamed on Harold's mother, Gytha, who (it is said) encouraged her grandsons, exiled in Ireland, to come to England to loot, pillage, and cause mayhem. It is perhaps in this context that the Chew Valley Hoard was buried.

As such, it provides insights into the fragility of the Norman regime in the aftermath of the Battle of Hastings (14 October) and before William was crowned king (25 December 1066).

For numismatists, the Chew Valley Hoard is fascinating since it provides new light on England's monetary system during the transfer of power from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman rule.

The hoard significantly increases the known pennies of Harold II, giving new information on the local mints and moneyers issuing coins in his name. All coins are of his 'PAX' (peace) issue – the only type minted during his short (less than peaceful) rule.

The hoard also shows both continuity and change, with William I's coinage giving rise to new mints and moneyers. Within the hoard are also 'mules' (three in all) made using dies of Edward 'the Confessor' with William I (one) and Harold II with William I (two), suggesting haste or illegal activity, given the high level of regulation of coin production.

The hoard was found in 2019 by seven detectorists searching with permission on land in the Chew Valley, Bath and North East Somerset. It was found dispersed, so the archaeological context remains unknown; plans are in place to try and better understand how and why the Hoard was buried.

The find was reported as treasure via the Portable Antiquities Scheme and declared treasure on 14 December 2020. To enable this process, the coins were 'cleaned' and catalogued by conservators and curators at the British Museum.

Given the size of the hoard and its value (£4.3 million), it was not certain that it would have been kept together, and therefore, it represents a major effort by all, especially South West Heritage Trust, to acquire it for the nation. The hoard is on display for six months at the British Museum from 26 November 2024 before returning to the South West, where it will be exhibited in the Museum of Somerset, Taunton, for all to marvel at and enjoy. ■

BRITISH MUSEUM

Left: The conserved Chew Valley Hoard

University team reveals hidden WWII history of Alderney

The University of Huddersfield's Centre of Archaeology has helped uncover the little-known history of Nazi concentration camps on Alderney, the only British soil occupied by Nazi forces during World War II.

The Centre's work is featured in a new two-part documentary, *Hitler's British Island*, now available on Sky History, which highlights the brutal conditions faced by forced and slave labourers on Alderney and reveals that over 1,000 people died in the island's camps – far exceeding the previously recorded 389 victims.

Using non-invasive archaeological techniques, the team identified additional sites of forced imprisonment, many unmarked graves, and infrastructure that supported the camp system on the island.

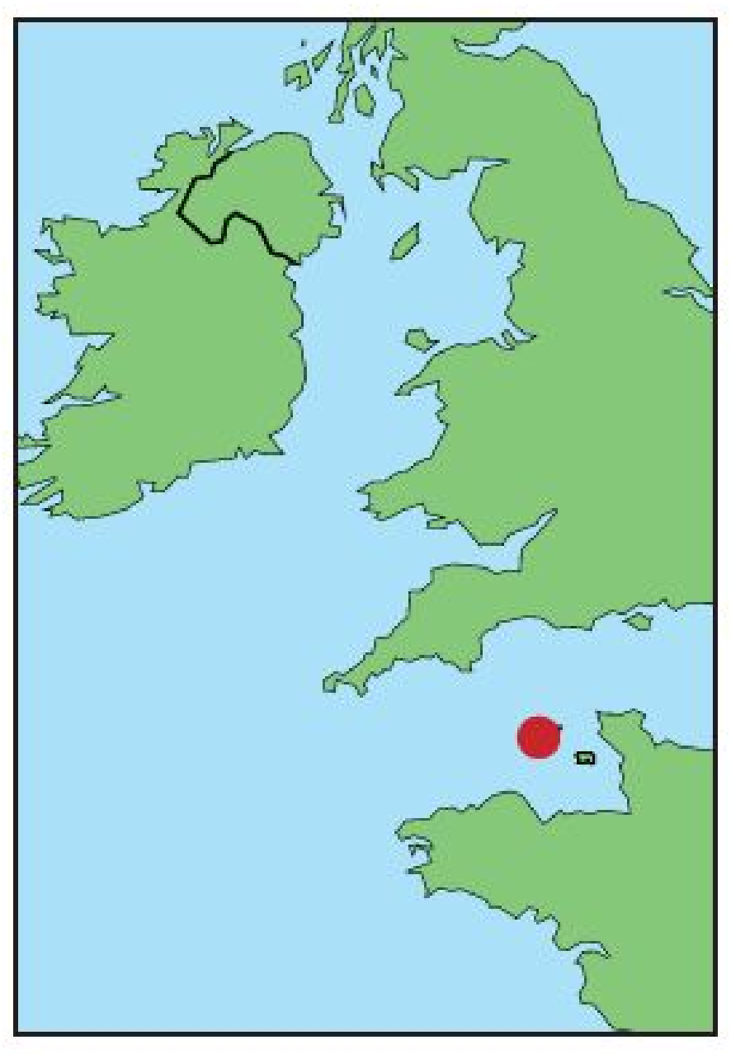
"The number of camps we were able to identify on the island was a lot more than was commonly known," said Professor Caroline Sturdy Colls, lead archaeologist from the Centre.

"There were four main camps that were named, but we found more than 20 sites. Some had purpose-built barracks, but others were houses that were fenced off and made into kind of makeshift camps and prisons."

The team's work was instrumental in a recent review of the Nazi occupation on Alderney led by Lord Eric Pickles, which presented its findings earlier this year. "The review was a really good opportunity to bring together academics from all over the world to validate our research findings," added Sturdy Colls.

As Alderney approaches the 80th anniversary of its liberation, this research brings renewed attention to the experiences of prisoners from around 30 countries who were taken to Alderney, with many of the deceased originating from Eastern Europe.

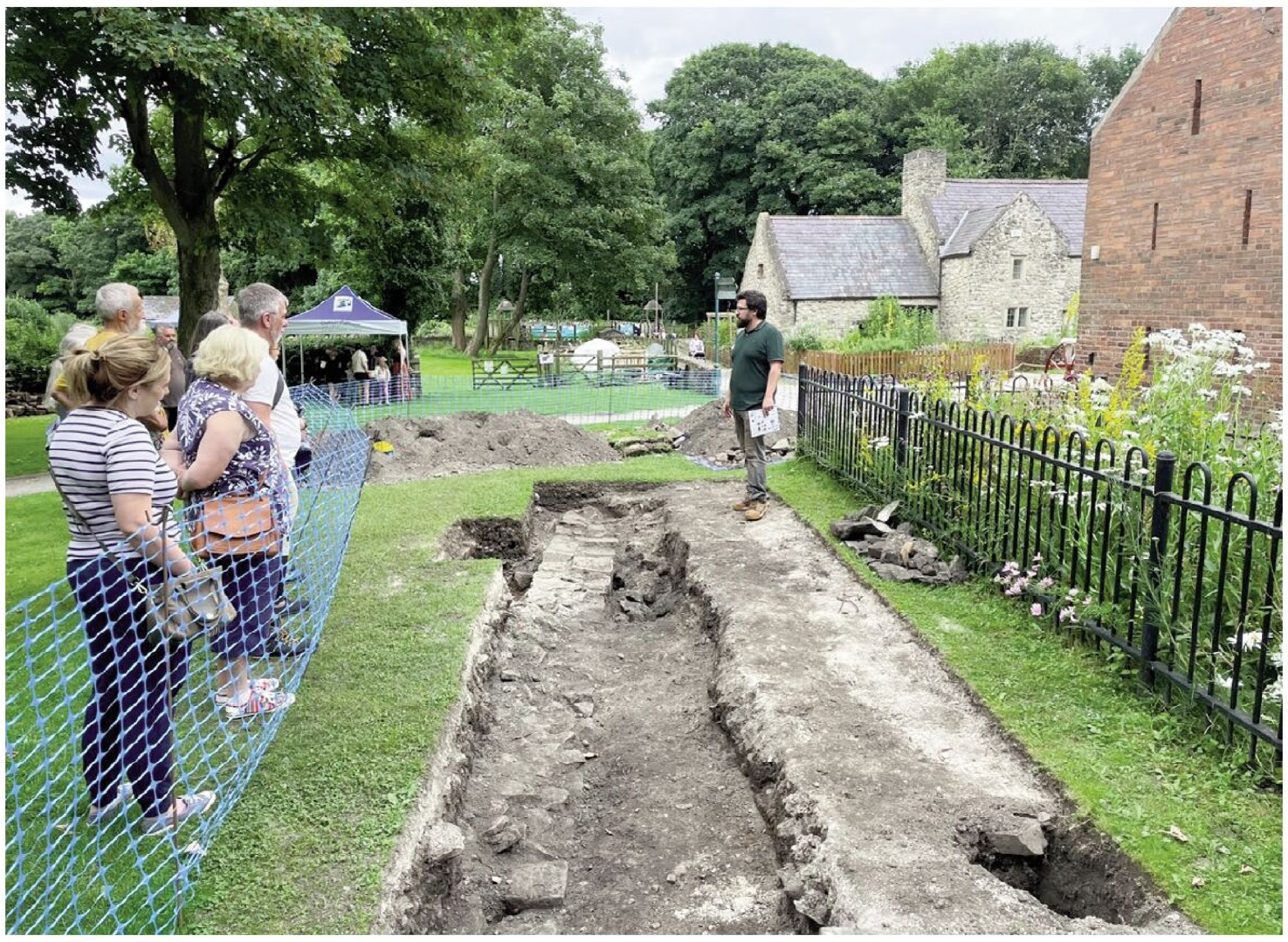
The Centre also investigated how Nazi authorities "tried to cover up these atrocities by creating mock cemeteries to make it look like they were doing everything in an orderly fashion," according to Sturdy Colls. Some graves were deliberately unmarked or had crosses removed, masking the presence of mass burials. ■



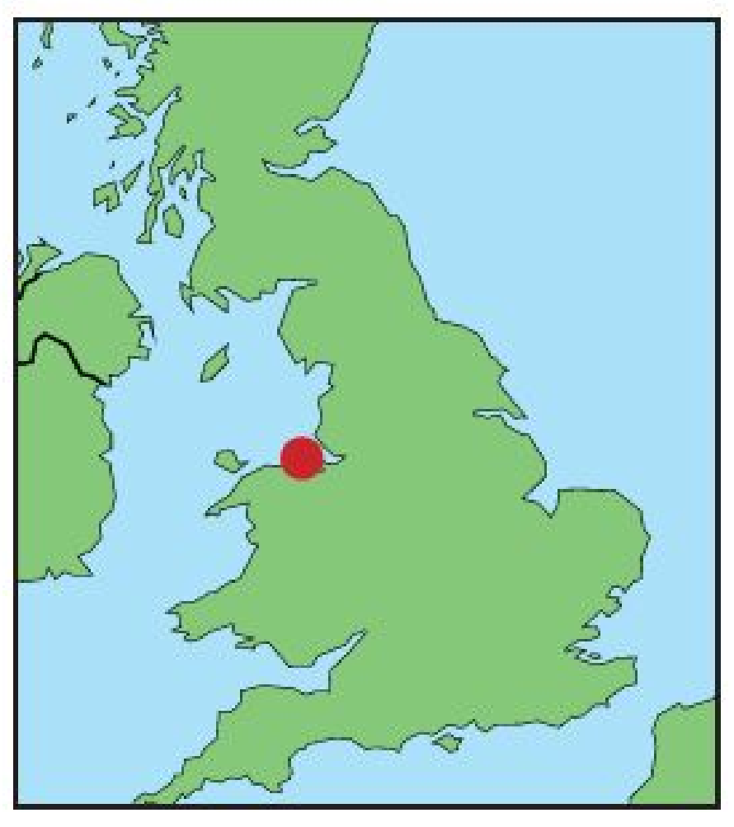
Below: German fortifications on Alderney

KEVIN COLLS

2,000-year-old settlement unearthed by Heneb archaeologists in north Wales


HENEB

Top right: Visitors attending a tour of the recent excavations



Archaeologists from Heneb have uncovered a 2,000-year-old settlement at Greenfield Valley Heritage Park in north Wales. The discovery, led by Heneb's field services team, has revealed the remains of two Iron Age roundhouses and a range of Roman-era artefacts, indicating a thriving settlement with connections to Roman trade.

Among the findings, the highlight was a Late Iron Age triskele mount – an ornate fitting used for horse bridles, depicting a Celtic triskele design. Dr Carol Bell, chair of Heneb, highlighted the significance of the find, stating: "This discovery shows us that there was clearly a prosperous trading relationship between the native Deceangli tribe and the Romans during the late first century, possibly centred on the production of metalwork."

The discovery of the triskele mount was made by Edward, a young archaeologist who participated in the excavation. Reflecting on the find, Edward said: "It was amazing. The fact that it is around 2,000 years old is unbelievable."

Dr Bell noted the importance of community involvement in Heneb's excavations: "I am sure that discovering this important find will encourage Edward to learn more about local archaeology and history.

"This is testament to the work Heneb does to inspire the next generation of archaeologists and how our archaeological excavations involve local communities and encourage learning about the past through engagement."

This excavation builds upon a previous 2023 dig that identified Roman activity near Basingwerk Abbey, a twelfth century Cistercian monastery nearby. Both excavations are part of a broader project supported by the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund, with additional funding from Flintshire County Council, and the Greenfield Valley Trust, aimed at enriching Greenfield Valley's historical offerings.

The newly uncovered artefacts and settlement traces provide invaluable insights into North Wales' ancient past and may become permanent additions to Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, further enhancing the site's appeal for visitors and local residents alike. ■

Rare Bronze Age Wooden Spade Unearthed in Dorset

Archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology have uncovered an extremely rare and well-preserved Bronze Age wooden spade during excavations for The Moors at Arne project in Dorset. Believed to be around 3,500 years old, the spade is one of the oldest wooden tools ever discovered in Britain, with preservation made possible by the waterlogged conditions near Poole Harbour.

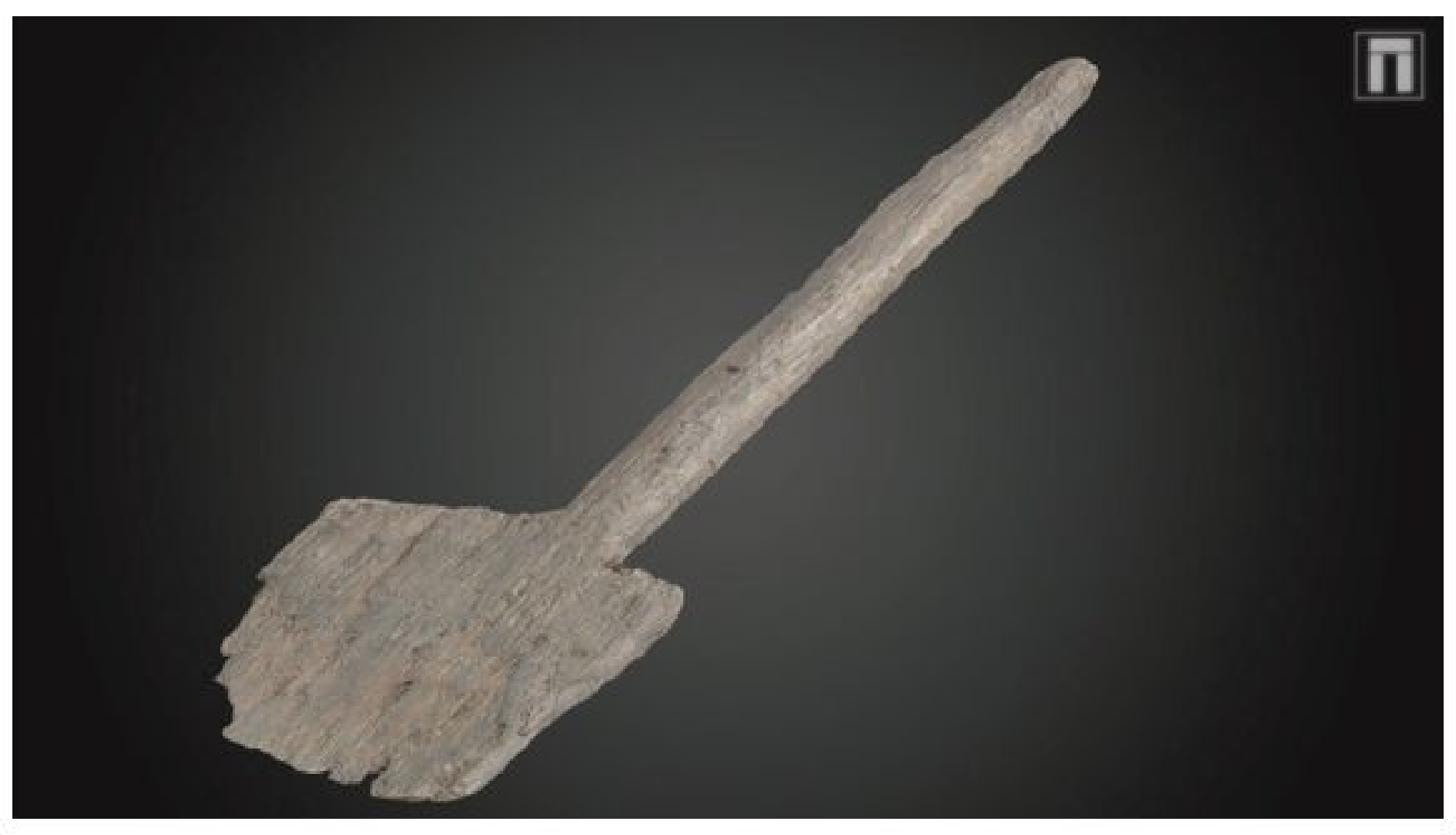
"The moment the spade started to be uncovered, the team on site knew it was a very special object," said Ed Treasure from Wessex Archaeology, who led the environmental analysis of the spade. "It's made of oak, and radiocarbon dating of the wood itself confirms it is c.3,500 to 3,400-years-old, placing it firmly in the Middle Bronze Age. This is an incredibly exciting moment and we're looking forward to finding out more as the process unfolds."

The spade, carved from a single piece of oak, would have been a valuable tool, requiring significant time and effort to craft. Archaeologists believe it could have been used seasonally for activities like grazing livestock, cutting and drying peat, hunting, or gathering rushes for thatch and basket weaving. It was found within a circular ditch, which may have helped protect useful resources.

"We're working across a vast landscape that is dominated by nature, with very little to suggest to the naked eye that much human activity has taken place here," said Greg Chuter, the Environment Agency archaeologist overseeing the programme. "However, just beneath the surface we've uncovered evidence of the ways humans have cleverly adapted to the challenges presented by this environment for over 3,000 years."

This is only the second known Bronze Age wooden tool found in Britain; the first, known as the Brynlow Shovel, was discovered in 1875 in Cheshire. The team hopes that ongoing research will deepen our understanding of these rare tools and their role in Bronze Age Britain.

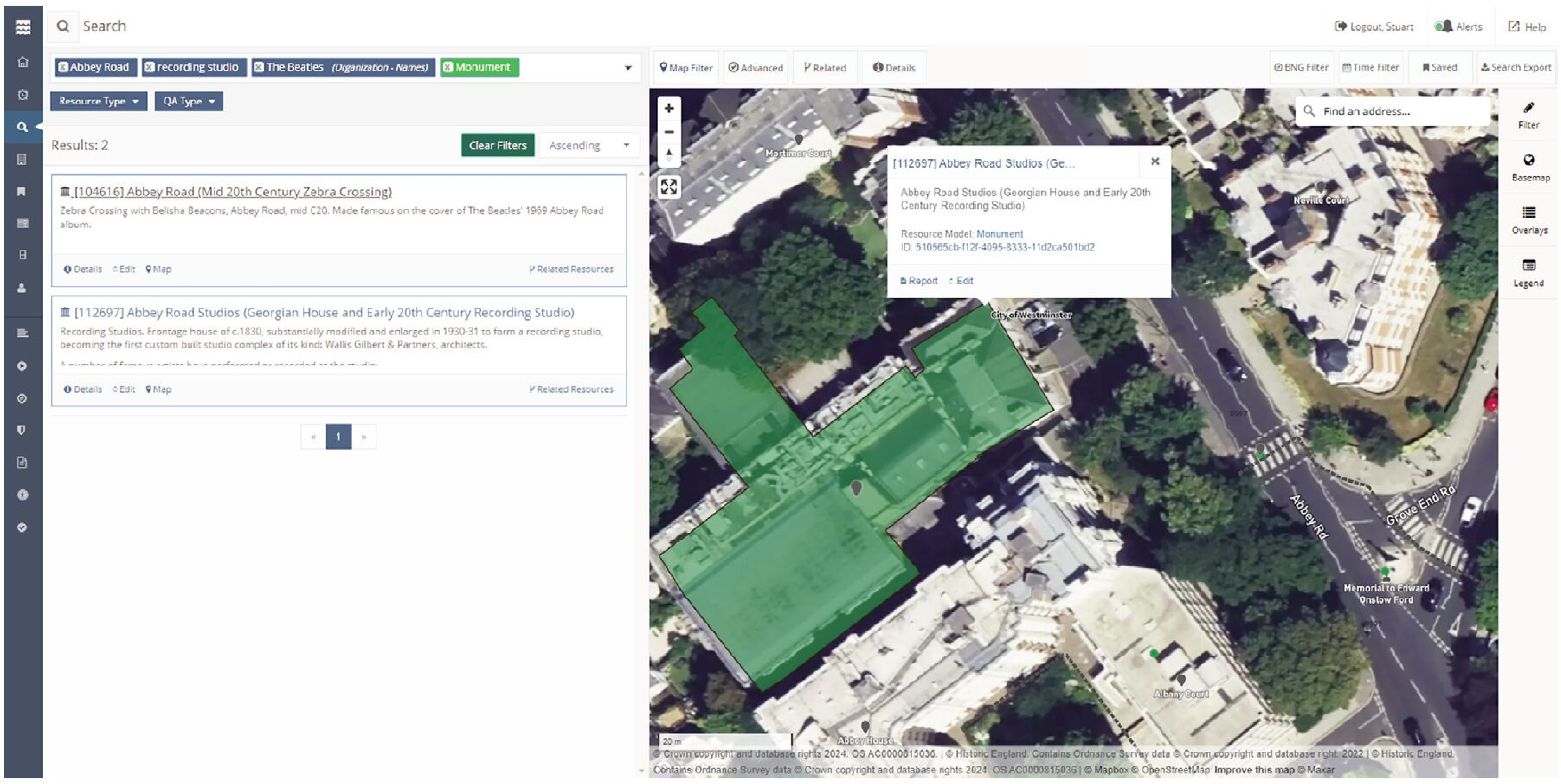
The project, led by Kier on behalf of the Environment Agency with partners RSPB and Natural England, aims to restore over 150 hectares into a diverse wetland habitat, highlighting the historic human relationship with this landscape. ■



Left: The wooden spade was preserved by the waterlogged conditions near Poole Harbour

WESSEX ARCAHEOLOGY

Getty and Historic England open London's history to global audiences



Results: 2

[104616] Abbey Road (Mid 20th Century Zebra Crossing)

Zebra Crossing with Belisha Beacons, Abbey Road, mid C20. Made famous on the cover of The Beatles' 1969 Abbey Road album.

Details Edit Map Related Resources

[112697] Abbey Road Studios (Georgian House and Early 20th Century Recording Studio)

Recording Studios. Frontage house of c.1830, substantially modified and enlarged in 1930-31 to form a recording studio, becoming the first custom built studio complex of its kind: Wallis Gilbert & Partners, architects.

Details Edit Map Related Resources

[112697] Abbey Road Studios (Ge...

Abbey Road Studios (Georgian House and Early 20th Century Recording Studio)

Resource Model: Monument
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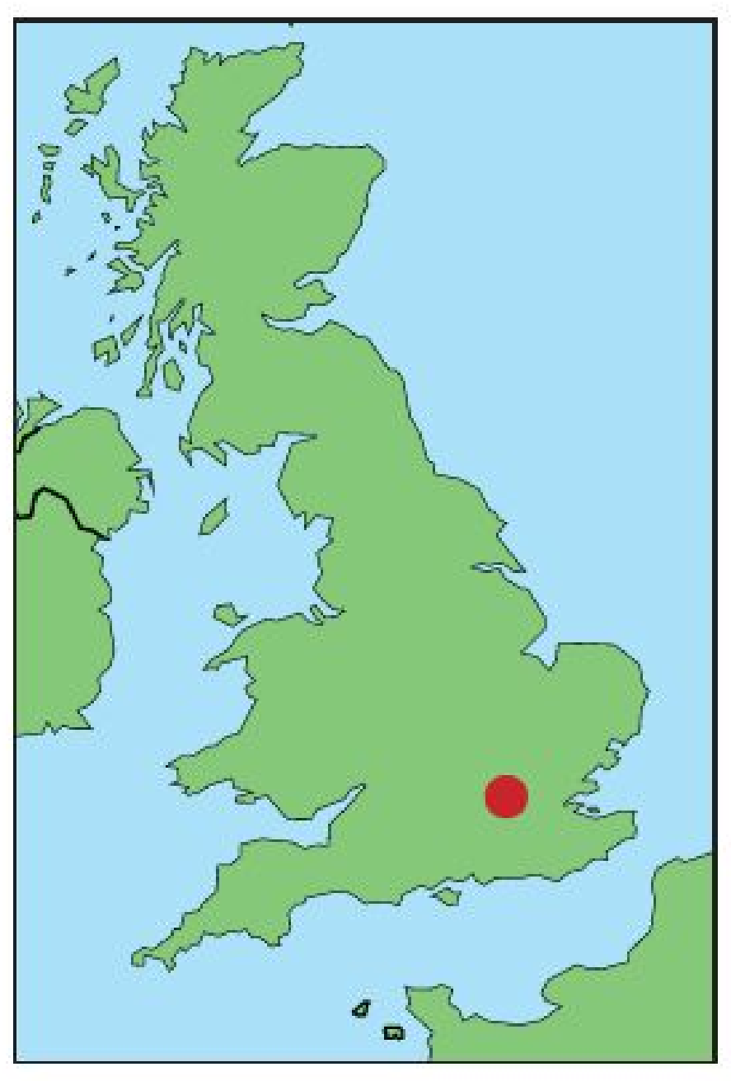
GETTY AND HISTORIC ENGLAND



Left: The GLHER entry for Abbey Road Studios (pictured below)

From Roman walls to Abbey Road, the public can now explore London's history online thanks to a new and improved platform developed by Getty and Historic England. On 25 September, the two organisations launched public access to the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) Online, a searchable database that includes records of nearly 90,000 archaeological and historic sites collected over 40 years.

Anyone with an interest in London's heritage can use the GLHER platform to search and explore information about archaeological sites and discoveries, historic buildings, parks, landscapes, and more. The GLHER database is a critical tool for the protection of the capital's past and a first point of call for professionals in heritage and development.

"When it comes to managing London's rich historic environment, knowledge is power," said Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England. "Opening up this invaluable dataset means everyone interested in the heritage all around us can dig deeper into the facts and find out more.

"Historic England's collaboration with Getty has reimagined the Greater London Historic Environment Record and set a new precedent, creating a remarkable and fit-for-purpose platform for enthusiasts and professionals alike."

Abbey Road Studios

HISTORIC ENGLAND ARCHIVE

Visitors to the new GLHER platform can search for sites by borough, by date, and other filters, as well as discover relationships between sites through time.

The thousands of entries include iconic places such as Abbey Road Studios – famously associated with The Beatles – and archaeological discoveries in the last decade, like the remains of The Curtain theatre, an Elizabethan playhouse used by Shakespeare.

For professionals in the cultural heritage sector, the GLHER plays an important part in the planning process. The GLHER is regularly consulted to inform new development on sites across London to ensure sites are recognised and given proper consideration.

The GLHER is powered by Arches, a free, open-source platform developed by Getty for use by organisations around the world to manage data and help protect cultural heritage.

To date, Arches is being used by more than one hundred organisations and projects around the world to identify and map millions of cultural sites.

"When we initiated development of Arches more than 10 years ago, our aim was to make a strategic investment to assist heritage organisations worldwide in modernising their information infrastructure needed for the protection of heritage under their care," said Tim Whalen, the John E. and Louise Bryson director of the Getty Conservation Institute.

"We are pleased that, with our partners at Historic England, Arches is being used to manage and share knowledge about the capital's thousands of years of history and heritage."

In addition to the new GLHER online platform, Historic England and Getty have also launched Arches for HERs, a software package tailored for the specific needs of UK heritage organisations, including England's 80-plus Historic Environment Records (HERs), as well as other UK HERs and heritage organisations.

Arches for HERs has been developed through collaboration between Getty, Historic England, and the City of Lincoln. ■

The world in antiquity

Summaries

Dr Alison Edwards

During the first millennium BC, horse-mounted groups began to spread out from the inner Asian steppes, and dramatically rewrote the cultural and political landscape of Eurasia. Horse riding increased travel and created new intercontinental cultural connections.

People may have been domesticating and riding horses in the second millennium BC or even earlier, but widespread equestrianism from the first millennium BC can be traced through the presence of horses in funerary contexts.

The Scythian culture is believed to have originated in central Asia and spread to Eastern Europe during this period. It is known for the deposition of a characteristic 'Scythian triad' of grave goods – the combination of Scythian animal-style decoration, weapons, and horse gear – in large burial mounds known as kurgans.

These ritual deposits closely reflect the description of Scythian funerary practices described by Herodotus in the fifth century BC. The spread of this 'Scythian triad' in the early Iron Age clearly demonstrates the emergence of pan-steppe cultural linkages.

Recent excavations have uncovered new discoveries at the royal mound Tunnug 1 in the Uyuk Valley, Tuva. During the ninth–seventh centuries BC hundreds of large burial mounds were constructed in this valley. Tunnug 1 contains a structure of larch branches, covered in clay and a stone casing. The well-preserved wood provided a construction date of the late ninth century. A scatter of artefacts was found above the clay but below the stone casing, which suggests a post-funerary ritual involving sacrificial depositions after the burial but before the stone tumulus was constructed.

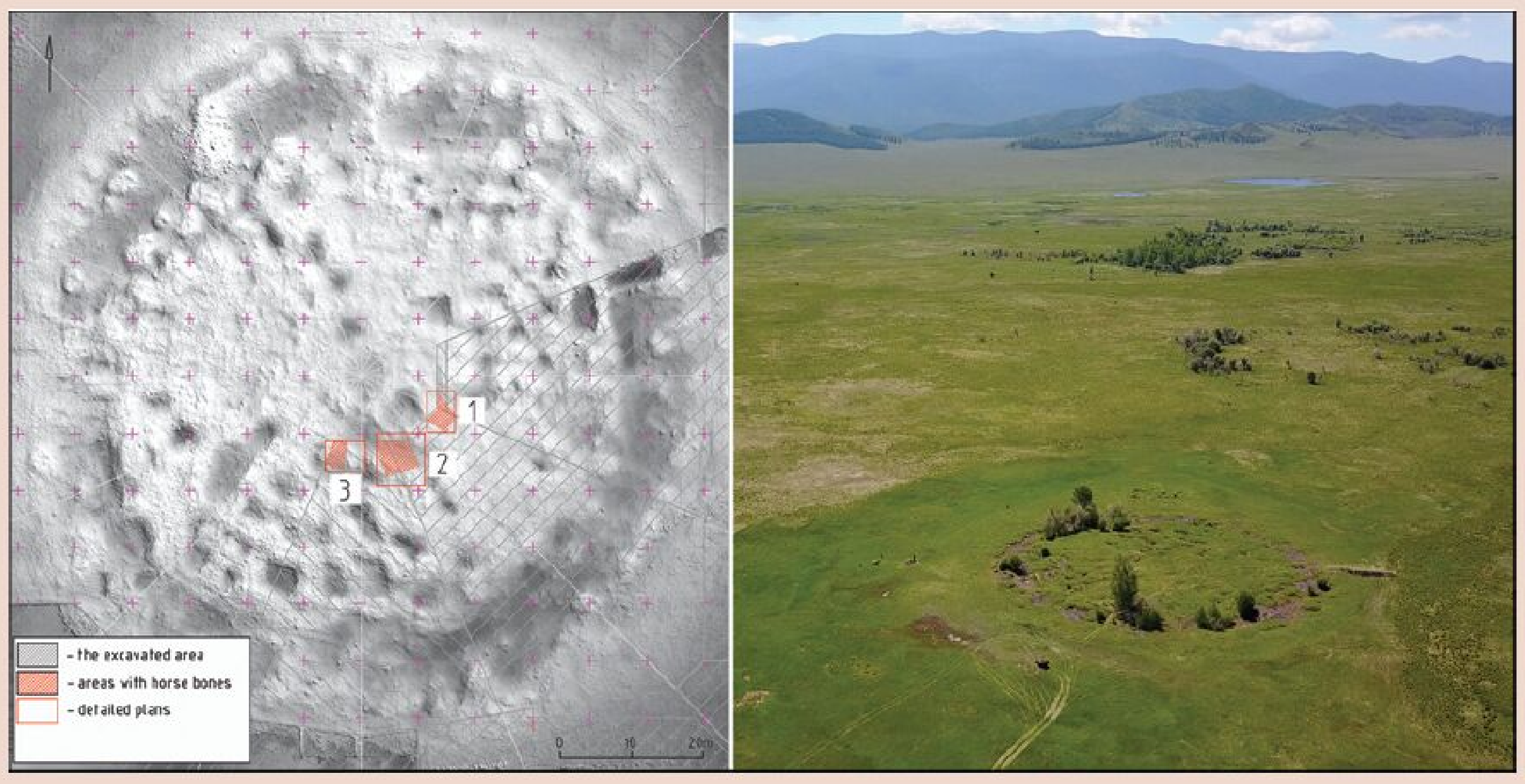


PHOTO T. WALLACE, FIGURE BY TIMUR SADYKOV)

EGOR MAZURKEVICH

Top: The site of Tunnug 1 shown as a digital elevation model (left), including the excavated area and the location of clusters 1, 2 and 3 of sacrificed horse bones, and as an oblique drone image before the start of excavation (right)
Above: Excavating the remains of a sacrificed Early Iron Age horse

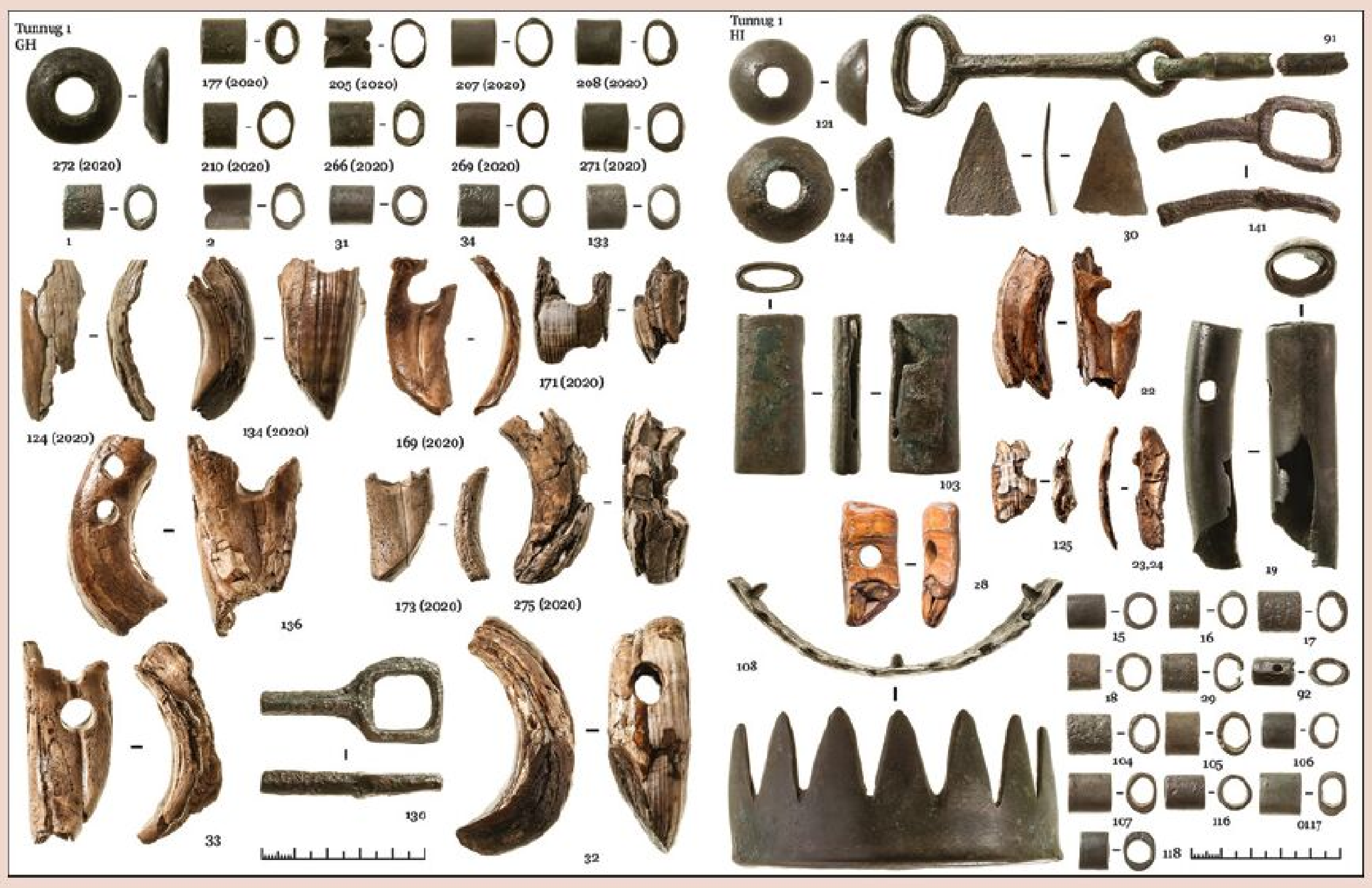
The finds include three clusters of horse bones, as well as human bones, boar tusks, horse tack, and metal items including a bronze knife and arrowheads.

All the bones were fragmentary with skeletal remains of at least 18 different horses found. In all 10 cases where the sex could be determined, the horses were male, reflecting the survival of male horse remains in earlier Mongolian Deer Stone-Khirigsuur and contemporary Pazyryk ritual contexts.

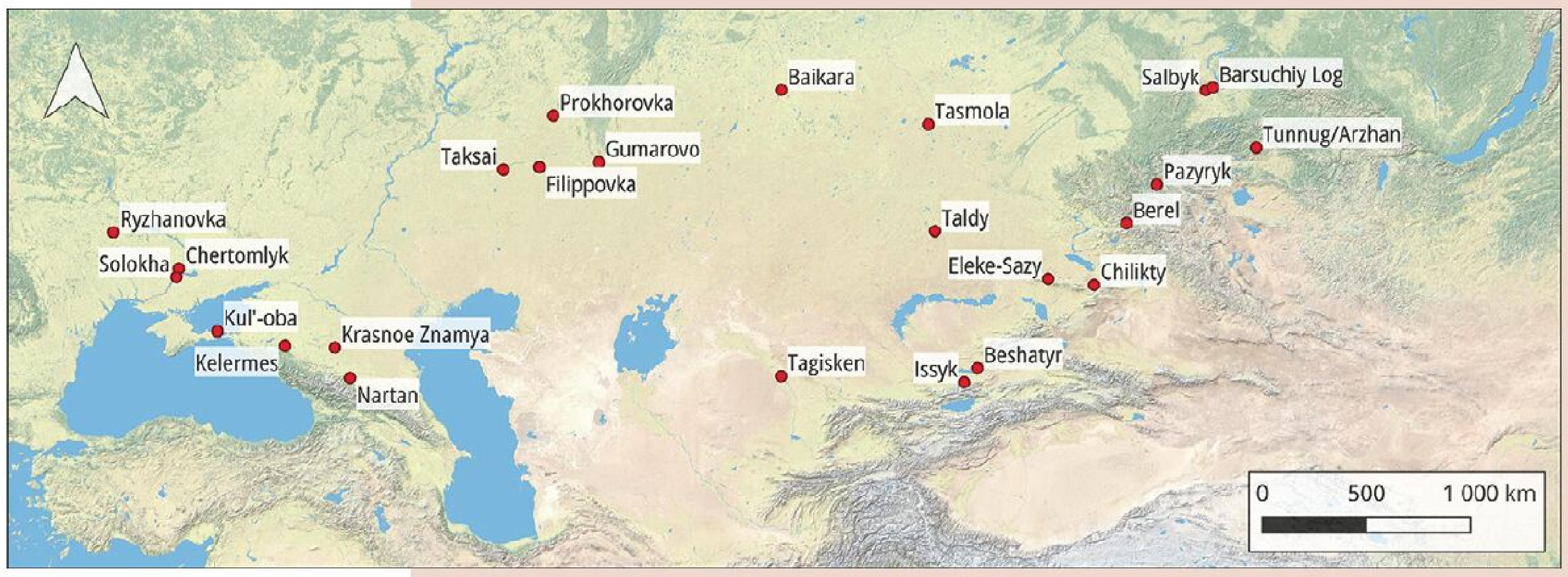
Snaffle bits found are of varying styles but have close radiocarbon dates. Some of the other metal finds may also be the remains of other equestrian equipment. The presence of two small belt fittings featuring Scythian-style animal motifs are among the earliest examples of this style and mark the transition from the Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age in the region.

These artefacts, associated with the earliest Scythian horizon in southern Siberia, suggest elements of Scythian funerary ritual were already present in the early first millennium BC, and may have derived from earlier antecedents in the Mongolian steppe. This demonstrates increasing cultural connectivity across the Asian steppes, facilitated by horse riding.

Right: Finds from cluster 2: left) sector GH – photoscale 50mm; right) sector HI – photoscale 50mm

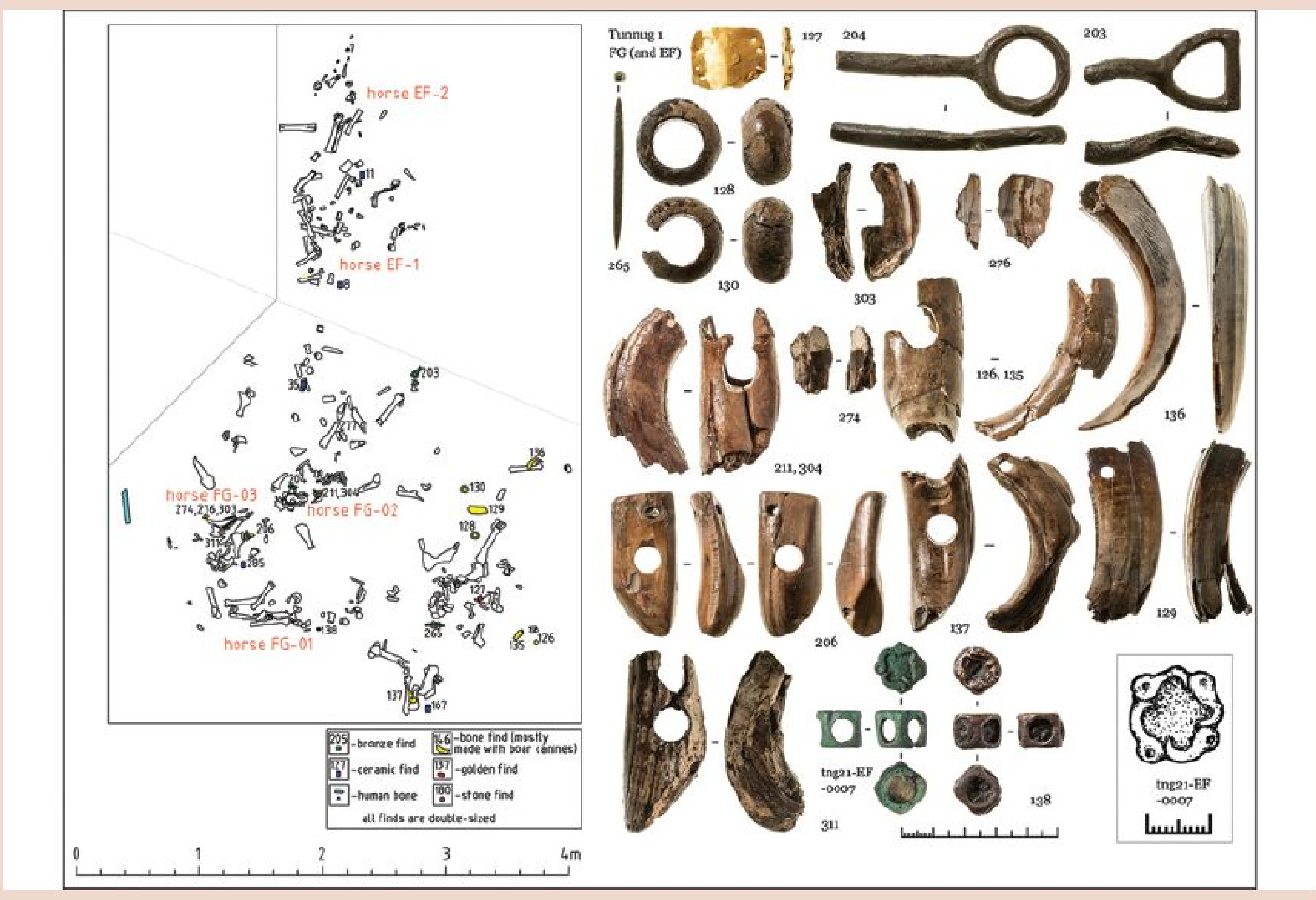


TIMUR SADYKOV [3]



Above: Locations of sites with elite burials from Scythian-type material cultures across the Eurasian steppes

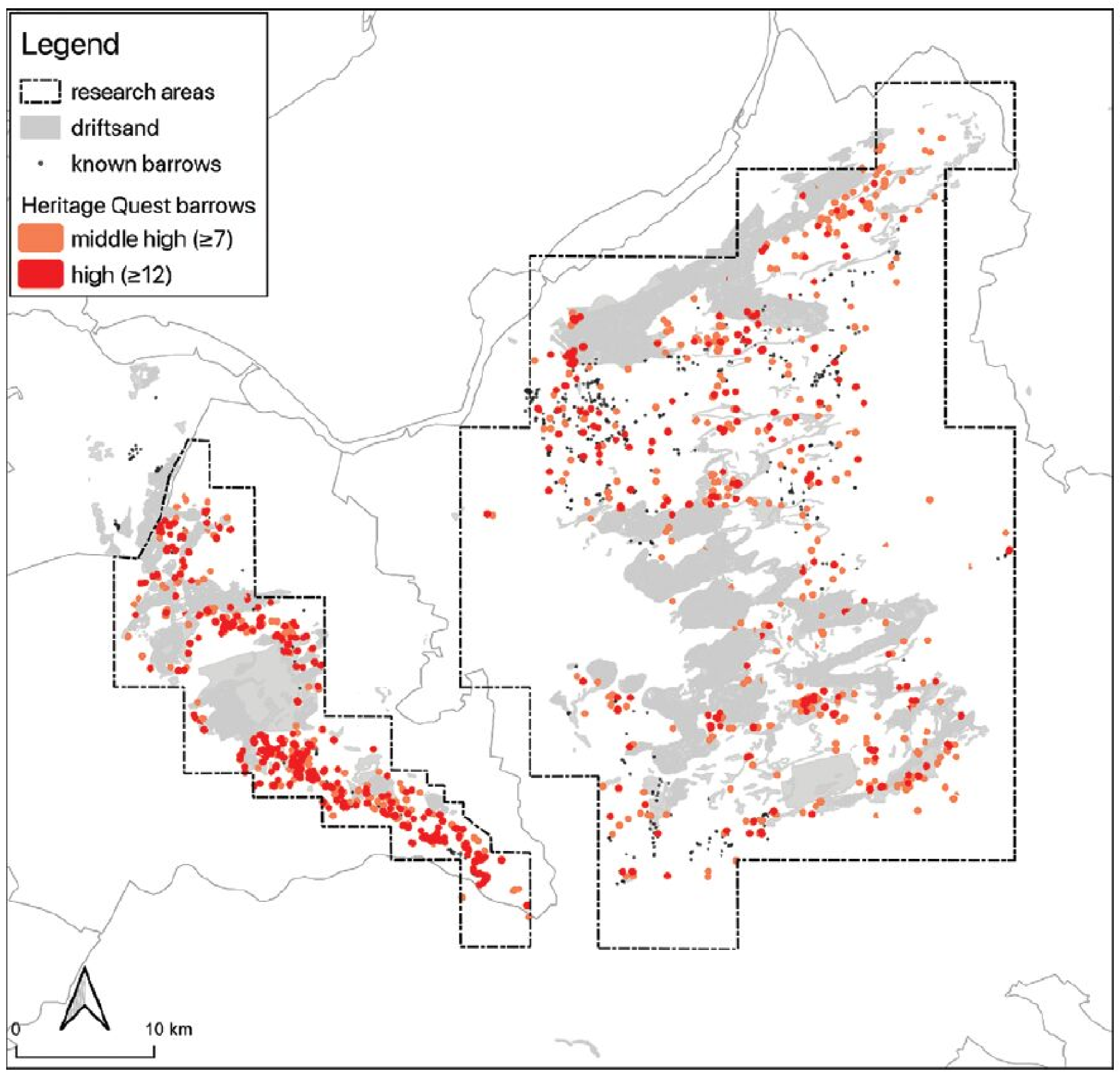
Right: Plan (left) and detail (right) of finds from cluster 3 – photoscale 50mm



"A spectral cavalcade: Early Iron Age horse sacrifice at a royal tomb in southern Siberia" by Timur Sadykov, Institute for the History of Material Culture, St Petersburg, et al.

The definition of citizen science is broad and can encompass many differing degrees of public involvement. In recent years, the concept has often been applied to 'crowd science', where large groups of volunteers participate in scientific research. Archaeology has used citizen science for decades, pre-dating its current popularity; volunteer participation occurs in excavation projects and surveys. Although there is potential for generating much valuable data through crowd-sourced projects, such as the analysis of high-resolution remote sensing images, concerns regarding the quality of these datasets have been raised.

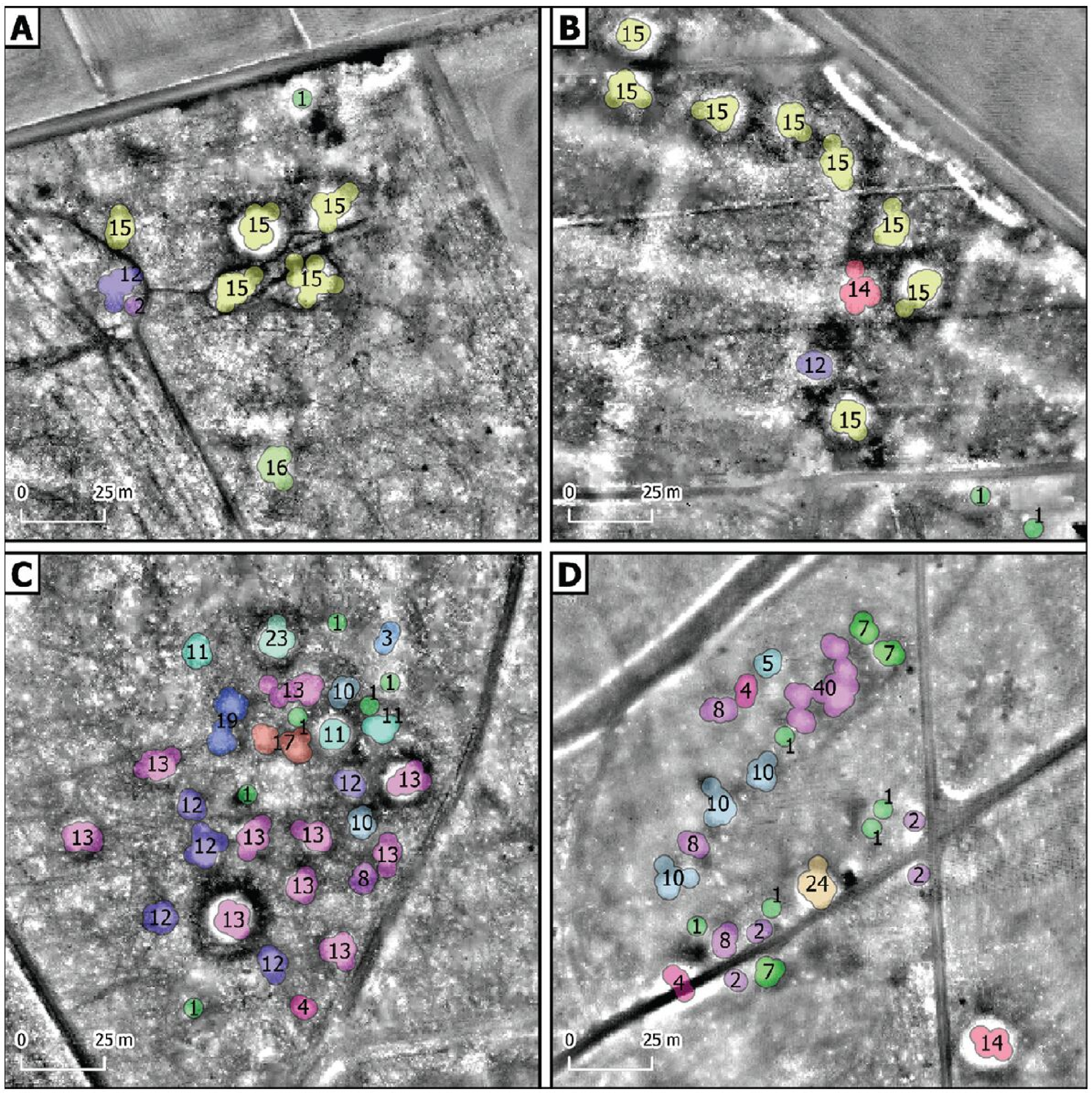
The results of the Heritage Quest project (Erfgoed Gezocht in Dutch), which used online volunteers to classify thousands of lidar images via an online platform, have been analysed to assess the reliability of the data produced. It focused on two regions in the central Netherlands that have similar geology, land-use and history: the Veluwe and the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, where undulating landscapes with forest and heathland contain well-preserved archaeological remains.



QUENTIN BOURGEOIS (LEIDEN UNIVERSITY) ET AL [3]

Above: Overview of the locations of all new potential barrows with high (red points) or middle high (orange points) probabilities, known barrows (small black points) and drift-sand (grey shaded areas) (co-ordinates in Amersfoort/RD New, EPSG: 28992)

LiDAR imagery is essential in detecting these remains, which are often obscured by dense vegetation cover. The entire area was divided into lidar images or 'tiles', each 300×300m. Volunteers marked possible archaeological remains. Each tile was checked by 15-60 volunteers before being retired. To prepare, volunteers were provided with a short tutorial on how to operate the website and identify archaeological objects in the images. A comprehensive field guide was readily available and a dedicated staff member monitored user-engagement and provided feedback and online support. Taking the results from both projects together, approximately 6.3% of the entire land surface of the Netherlands was classified. The final results were converted into a GIS map format, and the research team tidied the resulting data based on land use.



Results from aggregation at dense concentrations of potential barrows: A) aggregation results from a closely spaced group of barrows - all locations with 12 or more classifications are known burial mounds; B) aggregation results of a group of burial mounds within a Celtic field—volunteers were able to correctly identify all known burial mounds (12 or more classifications); C) aggregation results of a previously known urnfield on the Veluwe consisting of at least 28 or more low burial mounds (Verlinde & Hulst Reference Verlinde and Hulst2010; fig. 53). The volunteers have potentially discovered a much larger number of burial mounds than previously known. D) aggregation results of a previously known line of burial mounds. All previously known barrows have been identified, as well as a number of previously unknown mounds. Note that here, the classifications tend to blend into one another if the mounds are close, with closely spaced objects being added together (i.e. providing 24 or even 40 classifications)

380 locations identified as possible barrows were investigated through coring, of which 226 were interpreted as barrows. This is a precision rate of 0.59. However, when more volunteers agreed on the interpretation of the lidar, the precision improved; the rate significantly increases to 0.75 if 10 users agreed, and around 0.82 if 12 or more users agreed. Extrapolating from this, the volunteers likely discovered about a 1,000 potential barrows. This would double the current number of known barrows in the central Netherlands.

Although most volunteers were not trained as archaeologists, checking of each tile by multiple participants meant clear consensus could be reached. While crowd-sourced data can result in messy data sets, this project demonstrates that a consensus-based approach can be used to complement traditional, expert-led field-survey methods that might otherwise be too time consuming or expensive to cover a similar area.

The impact on volunteers, who are able to become actively engaged in archaeology through citizen science projects, also increases public awareness and understanding of archaeology. Volunteers have been inspired to create their own archaeological outreach and engagement projects.

"Assessing the quality of citizen science in archaeological remote sensing: results from the Heritage Quest project in the Netherlands" by Quentin Bourgeois (Leiden University) et al.

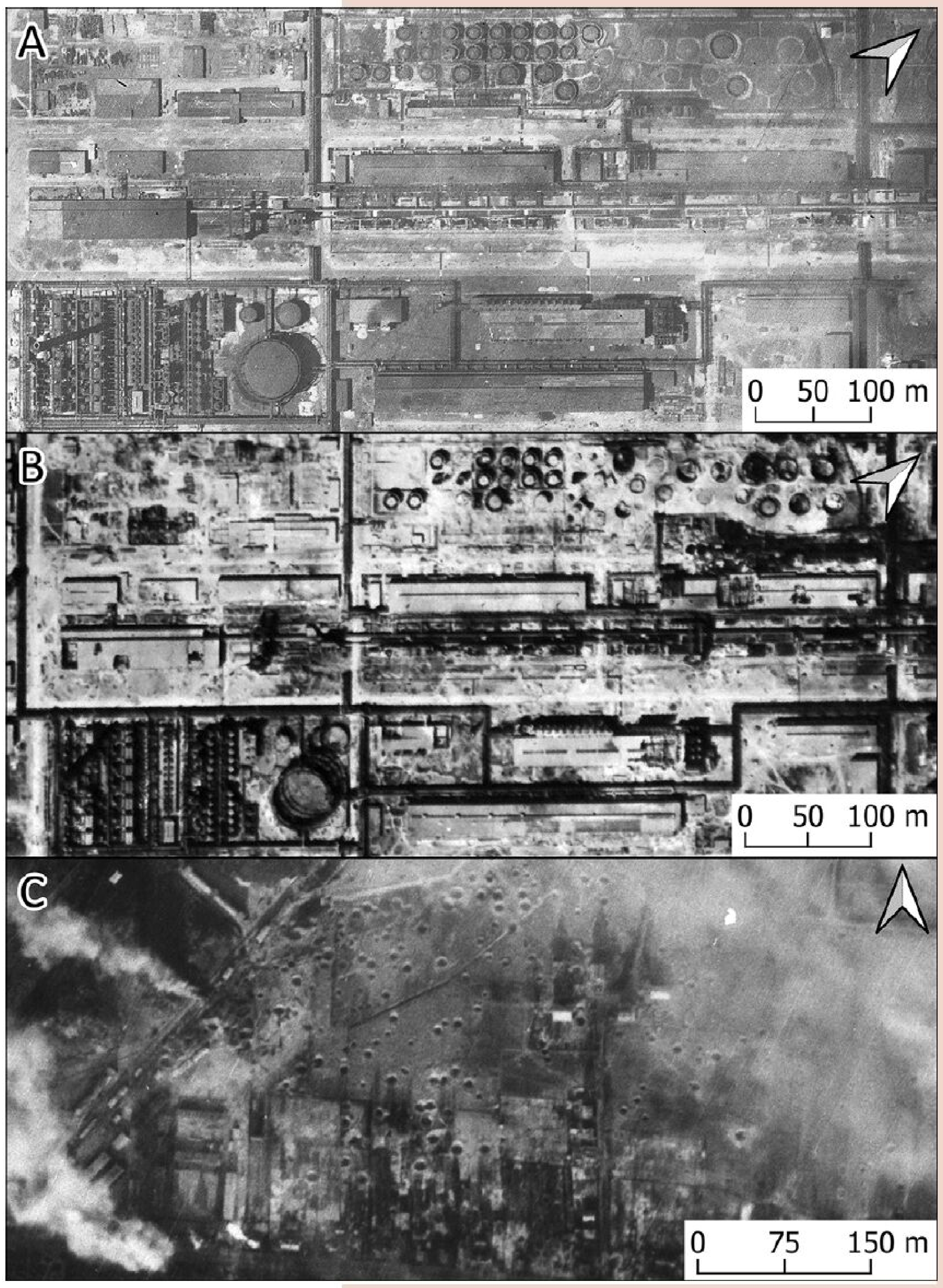
The Second World War changed the course of global history and left numerous marks on the landscape. A recent study has focused on a synthetic fuel plant, Hydrierwerke Pölitz AG, located in the vicinity of Pölitz town (present-day Police) in Poland. The site offers a compelling material testimony of the effects of Nazism and its eventual demise. In the 1930s, the German economy was almost completely dependent on crude oil imports from overseas.

The Nazis knew that synthetic fuel supply was key to self-sufficiency during the war. Construction of the Hydrierwerke plant started in 1938. Besides a large industrial plant, the site included defensive features, such as hundreds of anti-aircraft artillery emplacements, barrage balloons, and shelters.

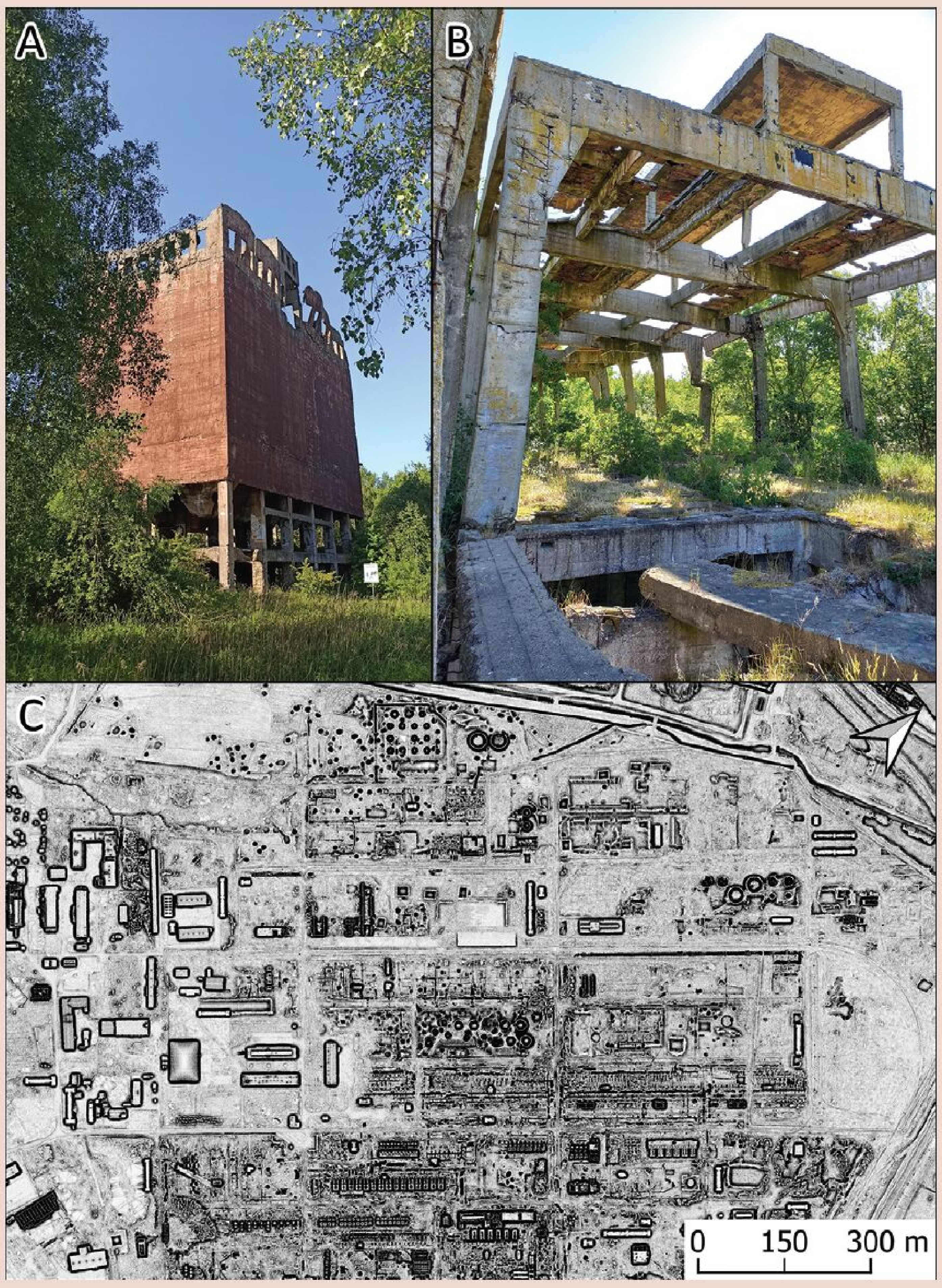
The construction and operation of the plant required the relocation of thousands of workers to this predominantly agricultural region. Prior to the war, the factory employed free workers but with the Nazi conquest of Poland, the number of enslaved workers surged. Up to 10 camps were established close to the facility, with the locations of eight now pinpointed based on a comparison of eyewitness accounts and historical aerial photographs. Despite enduring horrendous treatment, prisoners often engaged in acts of sabotage or disobedience. Escapes were frequent.

One of the more prominent acts of defiance was the intelligence gathering Operation 'Synteza', initiated by the Polish Home Army in 1943. Observations collected by enslaved workers were shared with the Western Allies, contributing significantly to preparations for the bombing campaign. Sustained Allied air raids caused severe damage to the plant and surrounding areas. Many bomb craters remain visible in the landscape. At the end of the war, Red Army forces scavenged the plant for metals and dismantled most of the former camps, erasing evidence of Nazi crimes.

Subsequently, the area was transferred to the Polish authorities and designated as military land. Post-war efforts to clean up and reuse the site were abandoned due to the presence of unexploded bombs and chemical pollution. Like many abandoned military installations, the plant acquired an aura of mystery.



Above: The destruction inflicted by the Allied bombing campaign: A) & B) the same area of the plant on 26 July 1943 and on 27 July 1944; C) devastation of the surrounding landscape caused by the bombing of the plant, 22 December 1944



Right: The ruins of the plant: A) the multi-storey coal mill; B) the concrete frame of the coal power plant; C) preserved relics of the plant registered by ALS (openness-positive)

G. KIARSZYS [2]

ÇINE-TEPECIK EXCAVATION ARCHIVE

After the military supervision of the site ended in the 1990s, the ruins of the old plant acquired a new role as a kind of 'other world', where everyday laws were suspended. Graffiti records its occupation by sub-cultures such as punks. This blended with the site's Nazi associations to create a sense of 'otherness', distancing people from its history.

The archaeological study of the plant made use of historical sources such as aerial surveillance photographs, airborne laser scanning (ALS) of an area covering around 380 square kilometres, and site visits and photography. Additionally, interviews with local history enthusiasts were conducted to explore contemporary perceptions.

The plant continues to provoke interest. This influence can be categorised into three spheres: Context-independent use of the ruins; bottom-up commemoration; and heritage tourism. In 2006, local heritage enthusiasts undertook maintenance, establishing signage and paths, offering guided tours, and creating a museum within former air raid shelters. Heritage tourism has since increased. Other areas of the industrial site and associated camps have been reused for farming or industrial purposes. This amalgam of different functions and meanings creates an almost surreal atmosphere at the site.

The documentation of archaeological finds, coupled with public engagement initiatives such as exhibitions, guided tours and educational programmes, fosters a deeper appreciation for the site's historic role. In this way, the ruins of the Hydrierwerke become poignant reminders of the difficult human experiences and legacies of the Second World War.

"The archaeology of a Nazi synthetic-fuel plant and its legacy: the Hydrierwerke Pölitz AG" by By Grzegorz Kiarszys & Maksymilian Dzikowski (Szczecin University, Poland)

During the Iron Age in Britain, non-burial traditions, such as cremation, mean little or no archaeological trace is left of mortuary practices. A new study argues that the decline in burials discovered after the Roman period may represent a return to Iron Age practices.

The fifth century is a period of significant cultural change in the archaeological and historical record of lowland Britain. A significant drop in population is likely, although debated.

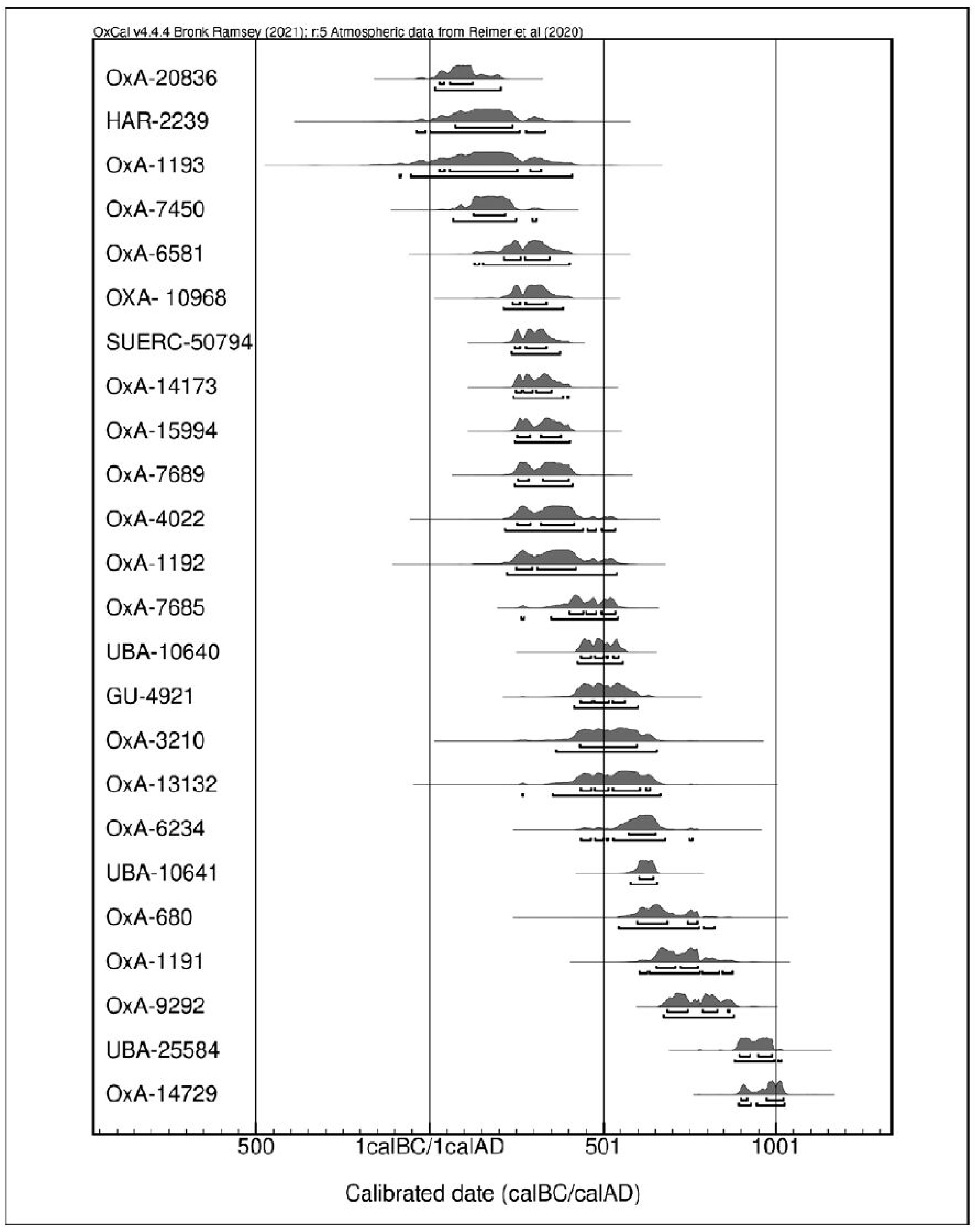
New forms of material culture appeared, most distinctively in furnished cremations and inhumations in rural cemeteries. The rituals and artefacts show associations with regions across the North Sea and have traditionally been explained by the arrival of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, as described in written sources; the nature and extent of this settlement is one of the most heated debates in British archaeology.

Current chronologies probably miss some material that belongs in the fifth century, especially its first half. This is partly due to a plateau in the radiocarbon calibration curve, which can make the fifth century difficult to distinguish from the early sixth century. Additionally, new types of deposited material may have been erroneously dated later than the fifth century.

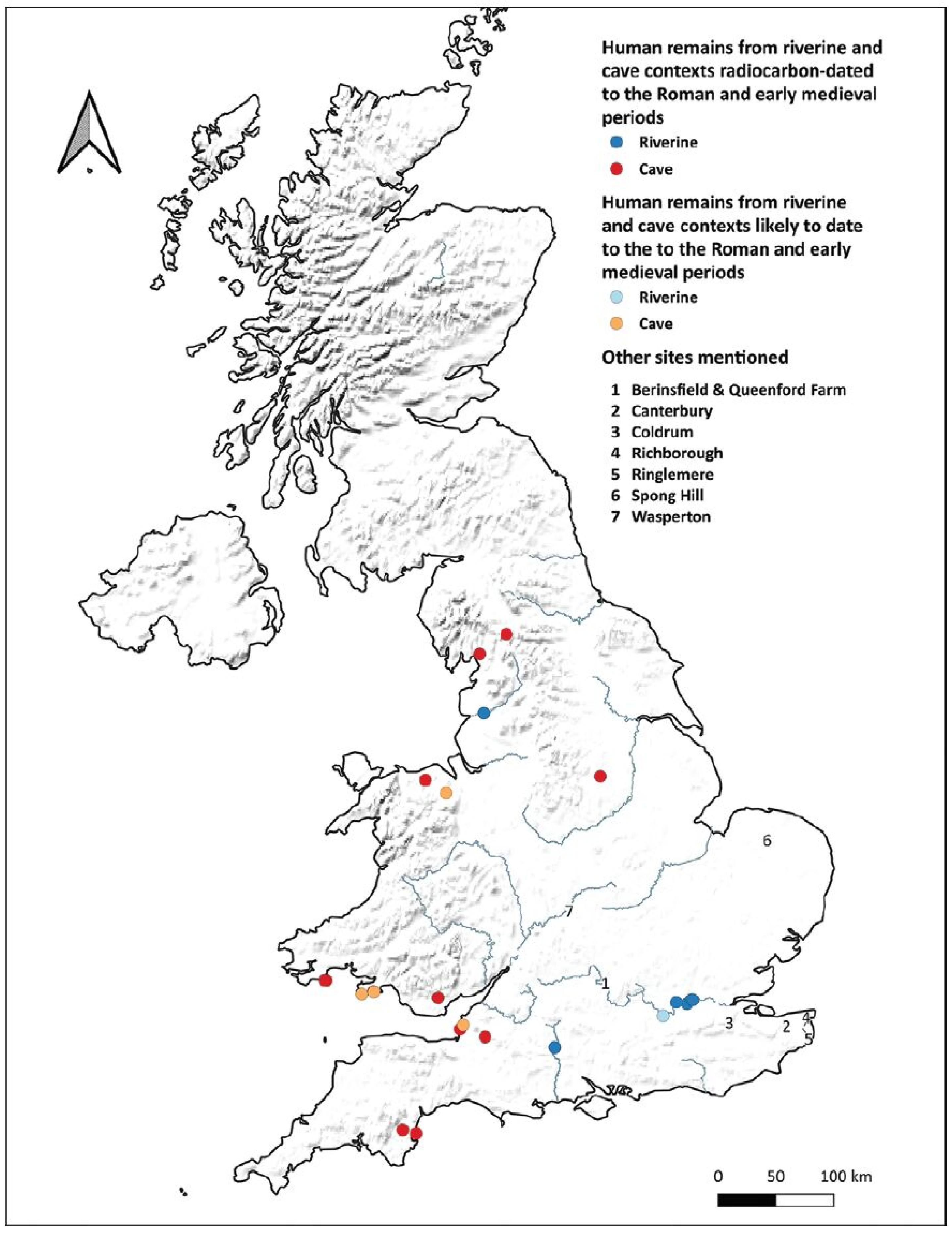
Nevertheless, the number of surviving fifth century inhumations overall is low. It has long been observed that the early medieval buried dead do not fully represent the living population, even in well-documented furnished cemeteries.

Other recent research in northern and western Europe has shown a variety of non-burial treatments in this period. It is likely this included practices that are archaeologically invisible, such as the scattering of cremated remains.

Current evidence points to a variety of practices for the treatment of human remains in prehistory, including sheltered exposure, primary burial and exhumation, and various further processing, use, and sometimes careful deposition of bone.



Above: Calibrated radiocarbon dates of human remains from riverine or cave contexts


Human remains from riverine and cave contexts radiocarbon-dated to the Roman and early medieval periods
● Riverine
● Cave
Human remains from riverine and cave contexts likely to date to the to the Roman and early medieval periods
● Riverine
● Cave
Other sites mentioned
1 Berinsfield & Queenford Farm
2 Canterbury
3 Coldrum
4 Richborough
5 Ringlemere
6 Spong Hill
7 Wasperton
0 50 100 km

EMMA BROWNLEE AND ALISON KLEVNÄS

Left: Map of human remains from riverine or cave contexts dated to, or likely to date to, the Roman and early medieval periods

A new analysis of disarticulated human bone recovered from riverine or cave contexts in England and Wales demonstrates that non-cemetery disposal of the dead persisted across the first millennium AD.

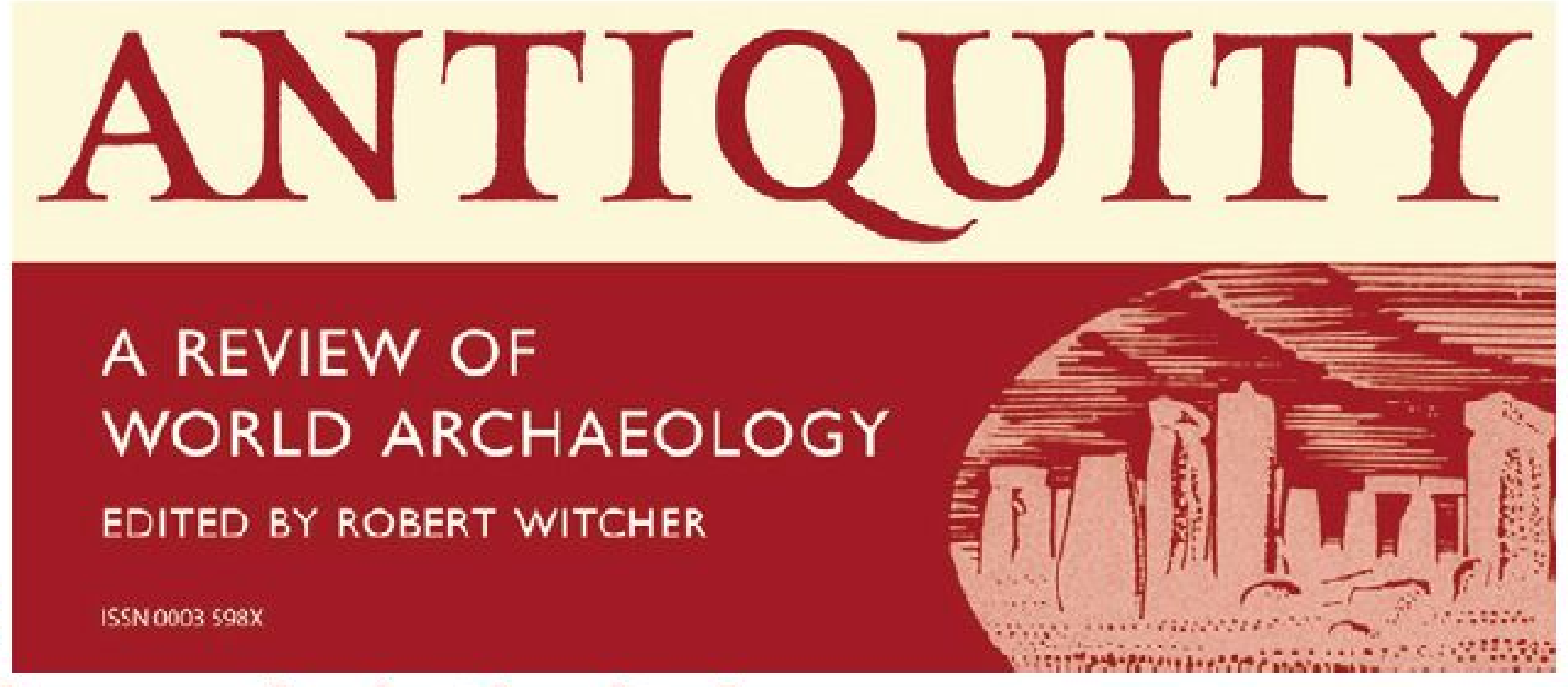
Remains found in caves are likely to be related to exposure practices, with large quantities of disarticulated bone indicating disposal in the cave itself. In contrast, fragmentary and isolated skeletal elements may indicate that bodies had been exposed elsewhere and token fragments retrieved and deposited in caves.

Skulls, which most readily sink, to be preserved in sediment, have been recovered from riverine contexts, although remains found in rivers may be the result of accidents or have eroded out of adjacent banks, rather than having been deliberately deposited in the water.

The riverine and cave remains identified cannot represent the entirety of non-cemetery disposal, and nor are they argued to represent a norm. Rather, these finds come from specific environments in which practices that are usually archaeologically invisible become visible.

Until recently, the key distinction drawn in mortuary rites in the Early Middle Ages was between cremation and inhumation. This study suggests the more profound distinction is between readily visible rites, which preserve a body and associated goods within a grave, and rites that aimed to disperse the physical presence of the dead.

"Where is everybody? The unburied dead in late Roman and early medieval England" by Emma Brownlee (University of Cambridge) and Alison Klevnäs (Uppsala University)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National Trust
Custodians of historic environments

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/PAUL HARRIS

Local volunteers carrying out excavations to save their heritage at the hillfort at Dinas Dinlle, Gwynnedd

National Trust archaeologists share some of their recent and ongoing archaeology projects, show how they are working with partners and communities, and discuss some of their challenges, achievements and ambitions

With contributions from Janine Young, Tom Dommett, Christina Newnham, Martin Papworth, Nathalie Cohen, Kathy Laws, Mark Newman, Shannon Hogan.

Founded in 1895, the National Trust has grown to become the custodian of thousands of significant archaeological sites, from the largest stone circle in the world at Avebury Henge in Wiltshire, to abandoned atomic research laboratories at Orford Ness in Suffolk.

Together they represent an unrivalled national collection. This 'historic environment' underpins all the 250,000 hectares of land managed by the National Trust – from coast and countryside, to farmland and formal gardens.

"Across the National Trust our archaeologists play a key role in ensuring that these remains are cared for, for the benefit of current and future generations," explains Tom Dommett, the charity's head of historic environment. "This is often a careful

balancing act, however. For instance, encouraging access to these sites, for everyone to enjoy, is a crucial part of our mission.

But footfall can result in 'wear and tear', just as we might associate with an historic carpet in a stately home, requiring the same careful monitoring and conservation interventions.

"Our Heritage and Archaeology Ranger Team (HART) volunteers play a vital part here, regularly visiting sites and monuments to assess their condition. However, our archaeologists also work together with other teams across the Trust on two of the charity's biggest priorities: managing and mitigating the effects of climate change, and nature recovery in the light of threats ranging from pollution to intensive farming.

Tom continues: "New technology and research play are crucial in helping to understand what has gone before and therefore what we can do now, and in the future.

As part of our national Blossom campaign we have been pioneering research into 'blossom' in the past – particularly through orchards – using historic maps and artificial intelligence.

"The findings revealed an astonishing 80% of traditional orchards had been lost over the last 100 years. Mapping historic land use like this across a variety of locations and habitats can help with planning and managing restoration projects."

In recent years, the Trust's archaeology work has repeatedly hit the headlines as it uncovers hidden stories and rewrites what we know about the past.

For example, at Chedworth Roman

NATIONAL TRUST/JAMES DOBSON

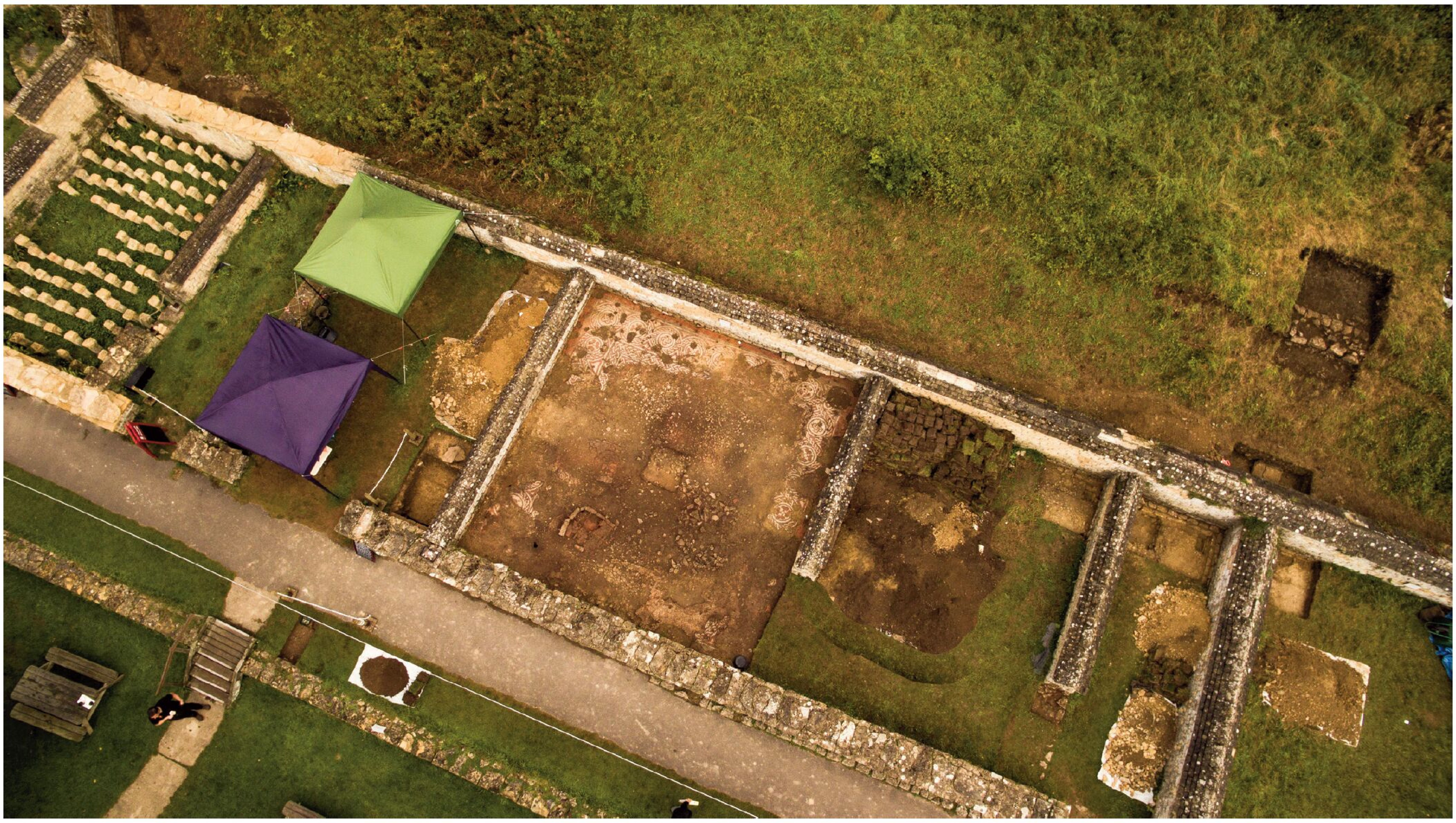
NATIONAL TRUST

NATIONAL TRUST/MIKE CALNAN

Above: Volunteers uncovering the mosaic at Chedworth Villa

Top right: Chedworth Roman Villa

Right: The fifth centurymosaic at Chedworth Roman Villa



NATIONAL TRUST/MIKE CALNAN

Villa in Gloucestershire, research using Optically Stimulated Luminescence on a mosaic revealed that it was fifth century, laid many decades, or perhaps even longer, after the 'end' of Roman Britain, challenging our ideas about this period.

And at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, ground penetrating radar, alongside other techniques, identified monks' burials and a former tannery, providing rich new layers to the understanding of how they occupied the site when it was a Cistercian monastery.

For a conservation organisation, archaeology has a huge opportunity to inspire people to care for and protect the nations' heritage. Participation in big celebrations such as the annual Festival of Archaeology (overseen by Council for British Archaeology) in July each year is just one of the ways the Trust is inviting those of all ages to learn more about the role of archaeology, to get involved and volunteer, join guided walks, tours and storytelling, living history demonstrations, and to watch and participate in archaeological excavations.

"Through all of our work, it's clear that the historic environment isn't really about the past," adds Tom. "It's how we appreciate and make sense of the present.

"And importantly it is where we can also take inspiration for the future, ensuring our places remain alive with history just as new chapters in their stories continue to be written. It's about looking back – and looking forward."

Top: Aerial view of the mosaic, Chedworth Roman Villa

Right: A group of volunteers uncovering the mosaic

NATIONAL TRUST/BARRY BATCHELOR

Below: Part of the fifth century mosaic, in the corner of Room 28 at Chedworth Villa

NATIONAL TRUST

Up at the castle

The ruins of Corfe Castle, parts of which date to the eleventh century, are a majestic sight looming large in the Dorset countryside, a reminder of bitter battles between Royalists and Parliamentarians during the English Civil War. Today, however, the castle faces a new battle, one caused by climate change and extremes of weather.

"The real impact we saw was the drought in 2022 when the walls dried out and stones were regularly falling," explained project manager Christina Newnham. "The hot weather dries out the mortar, but it also kills off vegetation. Where plants have roots

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deep in the walls, as they die and shrink, the stones loosen, putting them at risk of falling."

A £2 million conservation project at the castle is the biggest it has seen since the 1950s and aims to tackle problems across the ruins. Specialist rope access teams are conserving the walls to remove vegetation and prevent future damage, often while hanging high above the ground.

The work, which will see repairs on the nine towers, the keep, and the eight-metre-high (26 feet) curtain wall, is made even more precarious because the castle is perched on a steep-sided hill rising 55 metres above the valley.

Where the conservation and building experts are working, the archaeologists are never far away. "The archaeology that has taken place over the decades at Corfe Castle gives a horrific sense of reality to the history of the months' long struggle of the Royalists here," says archaeologist Martin Papworth, who has excavated at the site many times over the past few decades.

Much evidence of the battles that took place has emerged in that time, from musket shot and cannon balls, to a pottery hand grenade.

For the current project, however, one area of particular interest is the base of the east turret where a few stones uncovered nearly 30 years ago indicated the top of an arch.

It is known that in 1645 Parliamentarians besieged and captured the castle, having gained entry through a side gate (or sallyport) in the fortified wall. The mystery was whether this arch, covered in ivy and rubble at the base of the wall, was potentially the site of this sallyport.

After a two-day dig to explore the area, Martin confirmed he had found a sallyport – but not the one he was looking for. "The arch had been cut into the wall and led two metres through the thick exterior wall of the castle," Martin says. "Unfortunately, the gate was then blocked by the construction of the

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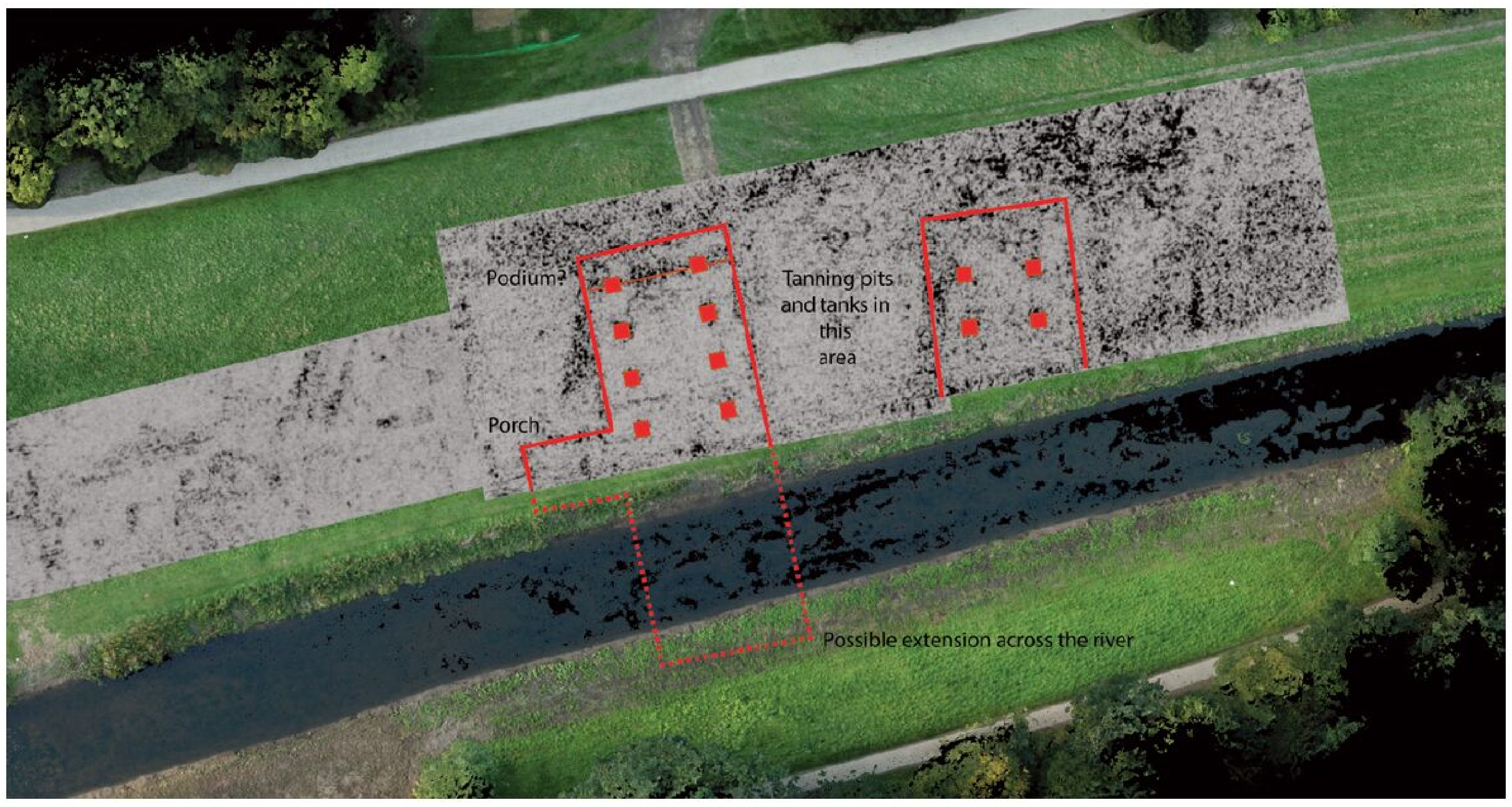
***Above:* A visitor walks over the site of the tannery at East Green, Fountains Abbey**

***Right and below:* orthographic aerial view, with the ground penetrating radar (GPR) data of the newly discovered tannery to the east**


Podium
Tanning pits and tanks in this area
Porch
Possible extension across the river

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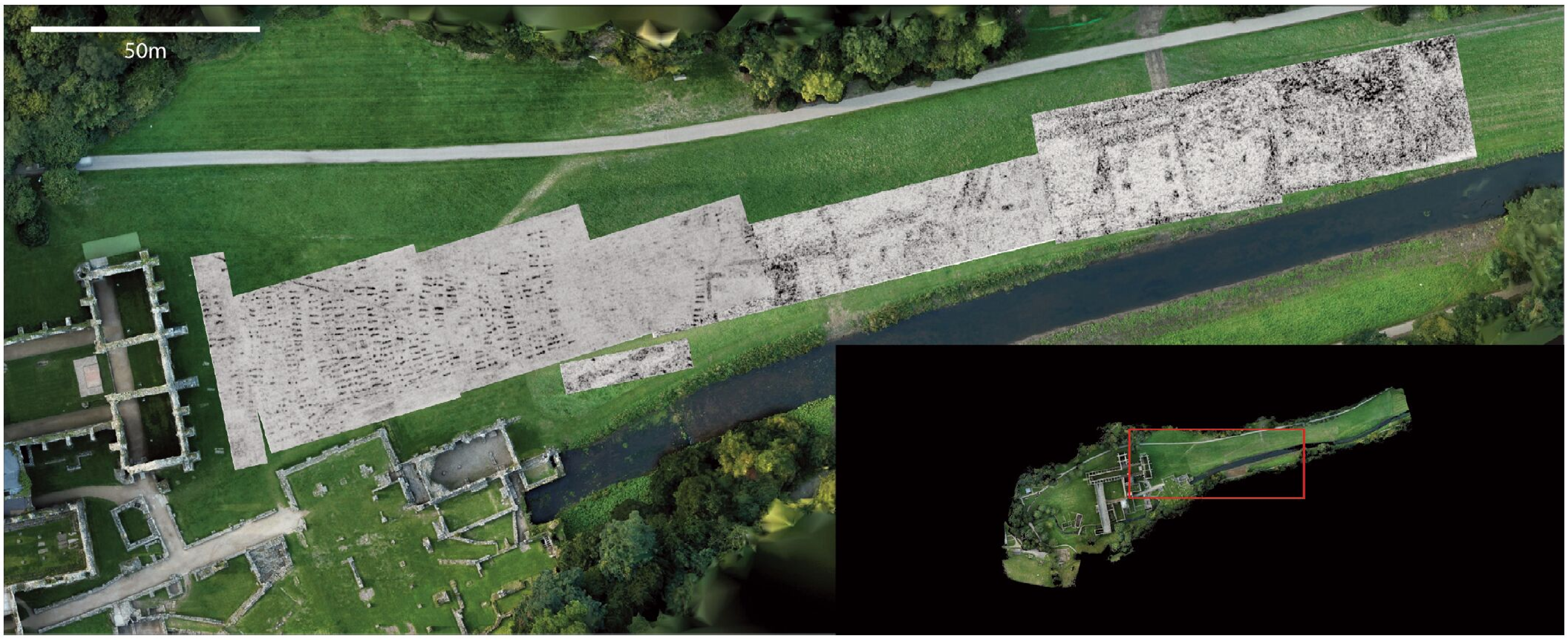

NATIONALTRUST/SOPHIEBOLESWORTH [3]

Above and above left: Work to uncover the sallyport at Corfe Castle

tower which had been built against it about 30 years before the Civil War began. So, this newly discovered side gate can't have been in use when the enemy soldiers got into the Castle, unless perhaps a hidden flight of steps within the turret runs under the present ground surface. This is very unlikely as there are no signs of a lower entrance in the slope of the hill.

"We found a sallyport, but where the Parliamentarians entered the castle remains one of the mysteries of the seventeenth century. The castle is holding onto this mystery for now."

What lies beneath

As a conservation charity with nature recovery among its aims, the National Trust has been calling in archaeological expertise to map its land.

Enhanced understanding of this archaeologically significant landscape is enabling the Trust to progress with confidence, safeguarding heritage features while planning land use changes with its tenants. This will help toward carbon capture, building climate resilience, and supporting nature restoration.

The latest location for this work has been at the Attingham Estate in Shropshire, where the largest geophysical survey ever commissioned by the National Trust has been undertaken. The one-of-a-kind survey, encompassing over 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) was carried out by Magnitude Surveys and used innovative scanning and mapping technology – with some exciting results.

The Attingham Estate encompasses a portion of the buried Roman city of Wroxeter (Viriconium Cornoviorum), and some of the land surrounding the city. Among the significant features identified by the survey work was evidence for what are believed to be two previously unknown Roman villas and a Roman roadside cemetery, on a road leading out of Wroxeter.

The two rural villas, the equivalent of a large country estate, show evidence of at least two construction or occupation phases, along with floor plans with internal room divisions and associated outbuildings.

Eight ditched enclosures and associated remains, many believed to be Iron Age or Romano British farmsteads, have also been detected by the survey. These would have likely been small farms perhaps supplying food for the adjacent city, four of these were completely unknown until now.

In addition, evidence for several Roman roads to the west of Wroxeter

Below and below right: Archaeologist Martin Papworth and the team at work at Corfe Castle

NATIONALTRUST/SOPHIEBOLESWORTH [2]

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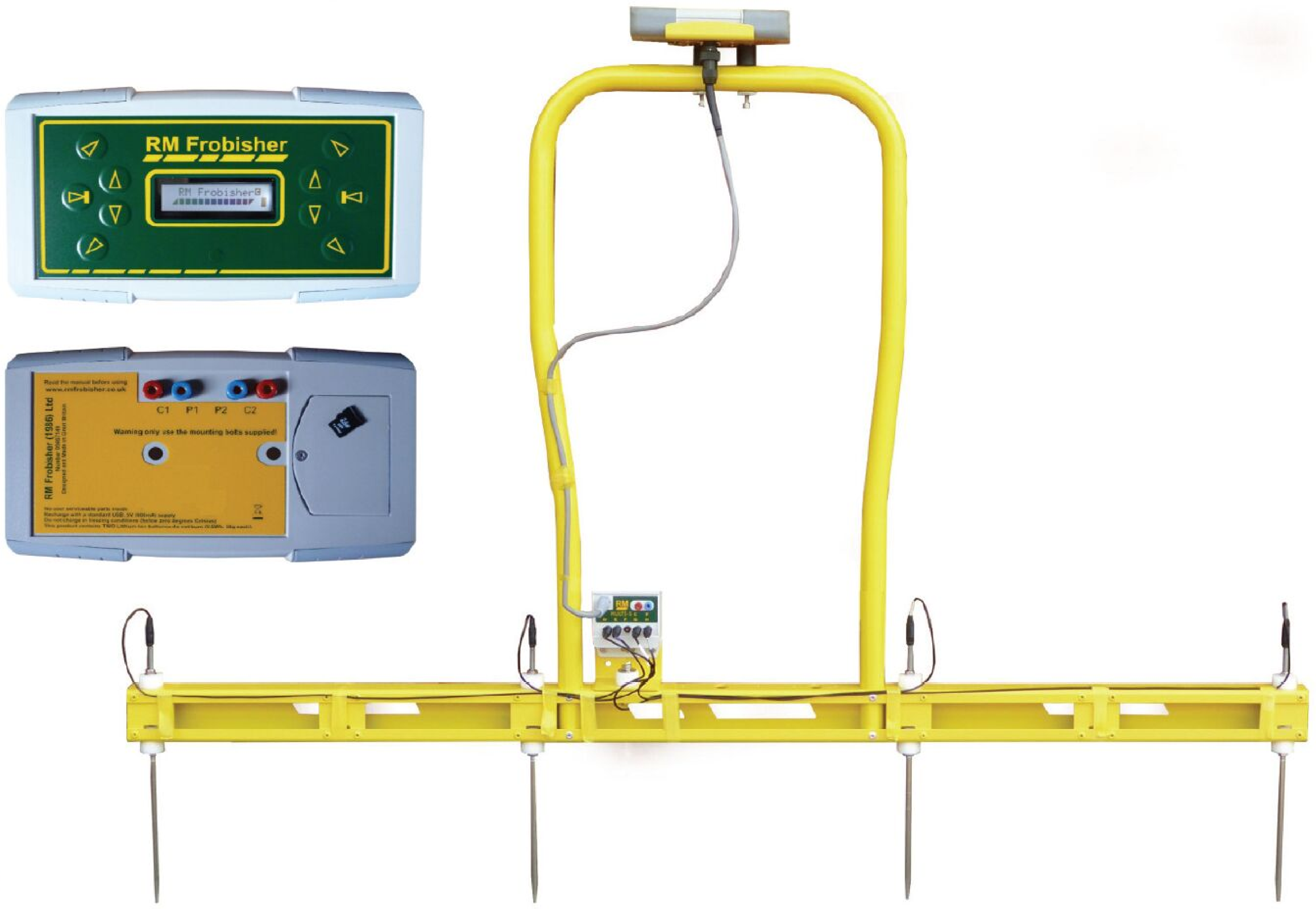

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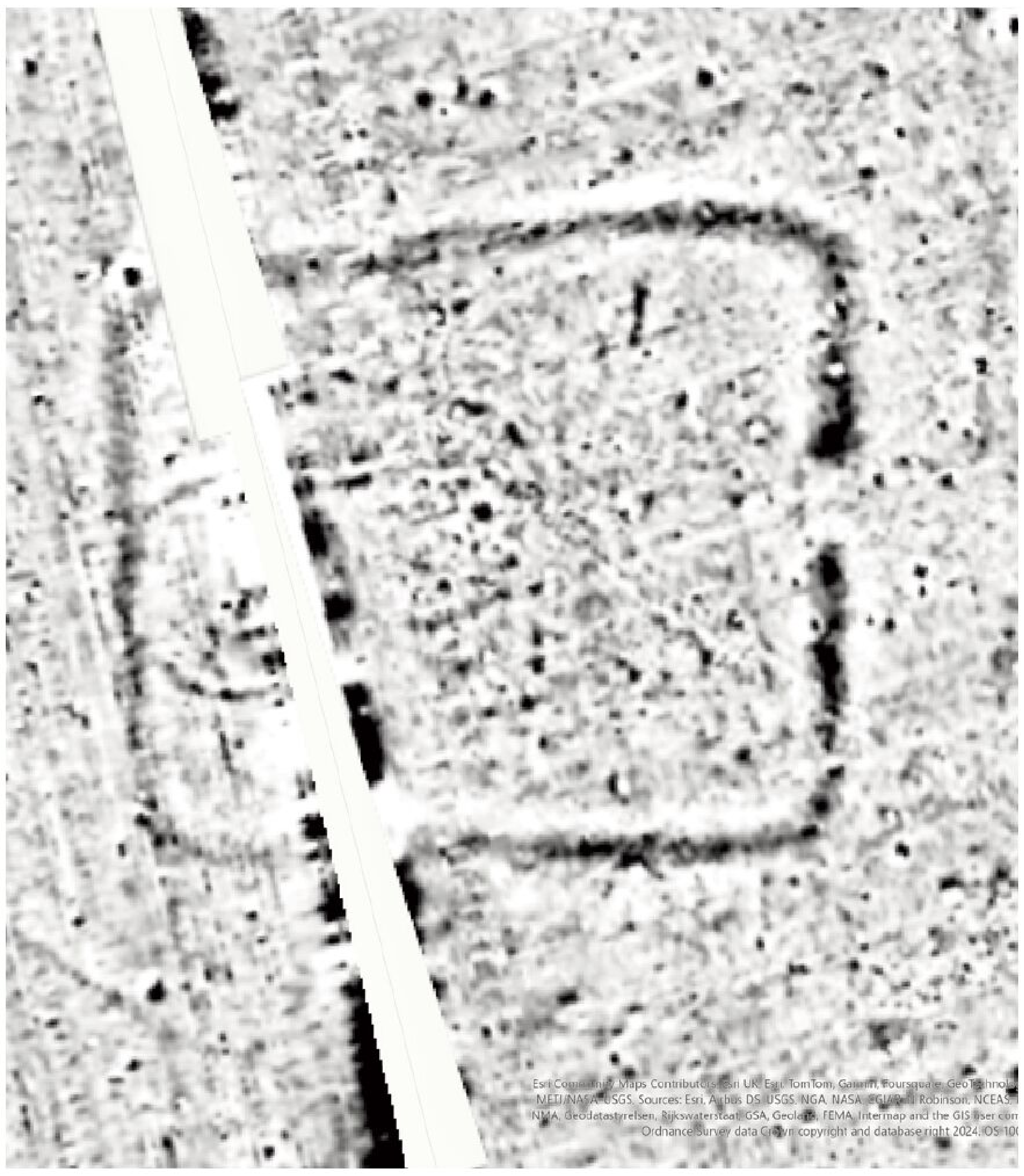

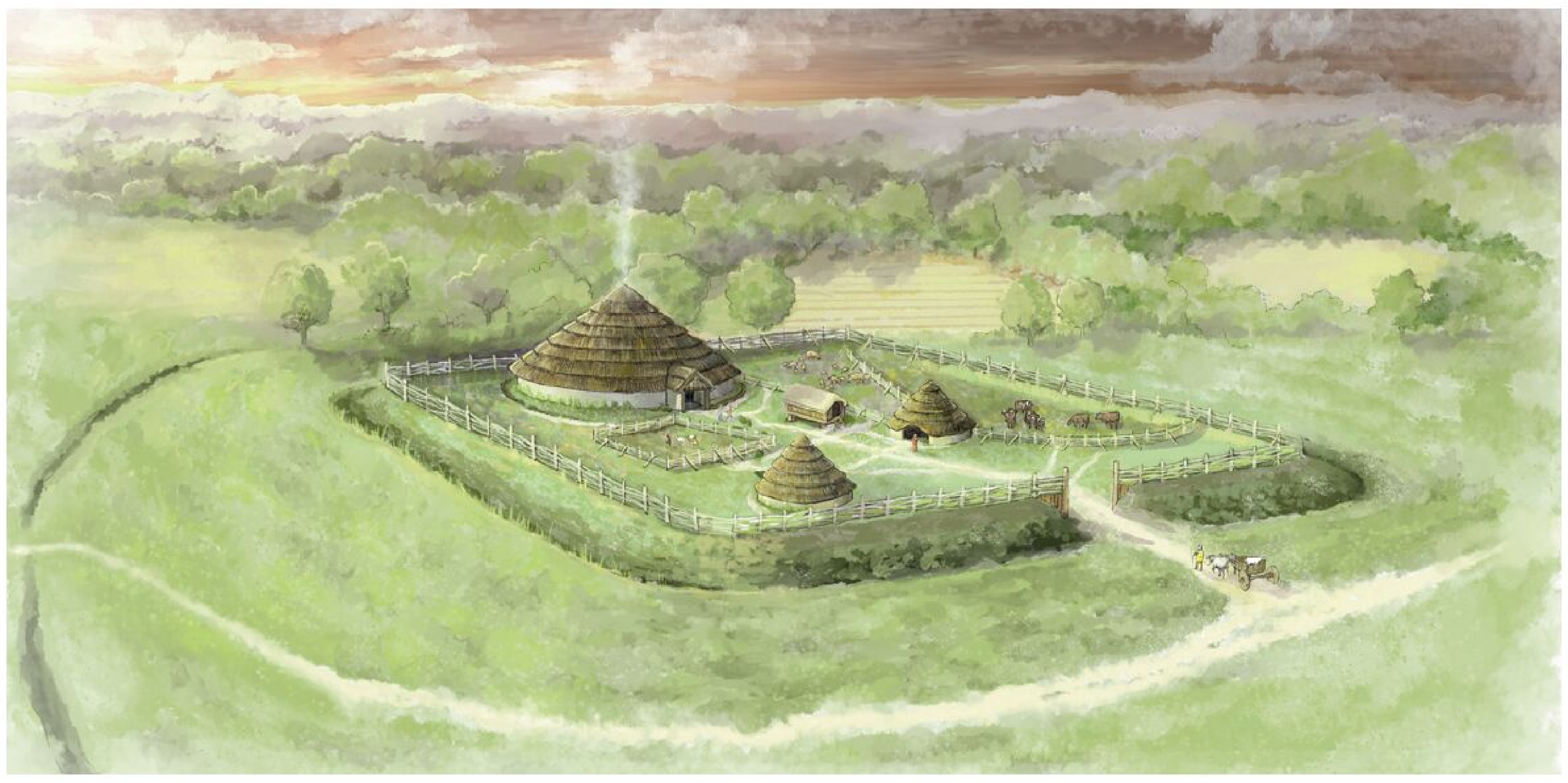

JENNIE ANDERSON

Top: Geophysical surveying of the Attingham Estate underway

Above: Greyscale geophysics data showing the site of a farmsetad enclosure with internal features

Above right: Visualisation of an Iron Age Farmstead enclosure

were identified and surveys have substantially enhanced archaeologists' understanding of the settlement activity immediately outside the defences of the city, and the changing use of the area during Roman times.

"Attingham Estate has always been known to have high historical and archaeological significance which has now been confirmed by this survey," explains archaeologist Janine Young.

"We've seen tantalising hints of these remains over the years, with evidence showing up in cropmarks, aerial imagery, and through small surveys and excavations. But until now, what lies beneath the surface of the ground has never fully been investigated.

"This new geophysical survey has really transformed our knowledge by establishing a comprehensive 'map' of what is below our feet, providing us with a fascinating picture of the estate's hidden past, revealing previously unknown sites of importance."

The project, supported by bequests and donations to the National Trust, will help Attingham to make decisions about where to plant trees, as well as pasture reversion, high nature status arable land, wetland creation, and floodplain management.

A rare find

Most National Trust visitors to Smallhythe Place in Kent are drawn by the story of its former owner, the Victorian actress Ellen Terry, whose costumes and personal memorabilia are on display. However, the hamlet of Smallhythe itself, which lies around 16 kilometres (10 miles) inland but was once almost coastal and served as a port on the River Rother, is of particular interest to Trust archaeologists.

A Time Team investigation in 1998 found a brick kiln, a piece of ship timber, and numerous medieval iron fastenings and nails, so Trust staff have known that the area was used for shipbuilding between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

However, they wanted to learn more about the site at this time and an excavation began after a geophysical survey indicated what might have been part of a medieval village.

Over a number of digs, and thanks to the support of numerous volunteers and community involvement, what started to emerge were Roman finds – an overwhelming amount of them, dating from the first to third centuries. For example, tiles marked 'CLBR', the stamp of the Roman 'Classis Britannica' fleet, showed that the fleet was active at the settlement there.

Other finds included ceramics such as an intact pot, and evidence for buildings, boundary features, and pits – which provide tantalising clues to the nature of this riverside community.

Nathalie Cohen, Trust archaeologist, was delighted however by the discovery of one particularly interesting object – the head of a figurine of the god Mercury, just five centimetres tall, made from pipeclay, which experts believe to be incredibly rare.

"Religion was a central part of daily life in most Roman provinces, and statues as well as portable figurines of gods like the one discovered at Smallhythe, probably from a household shrine, were worshipped by both the Roman elite and the ordinary citizens in their homes," she explains.

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NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/JAMES DOBSON [2]

"Pipeclay figurines were made of clays local to central Gaul (modern-day France) and the Rhine-Moselle region and were imported. However, most pipeclay figurines found in Britain are of female deities, the majority being of Venus."

Mercury was the god of the fine arts, as well as commerce and financial success, but while he is the most common god for metal figurines, pipeclay examples are extremely rare, with less than 10 found from Roman Britain.

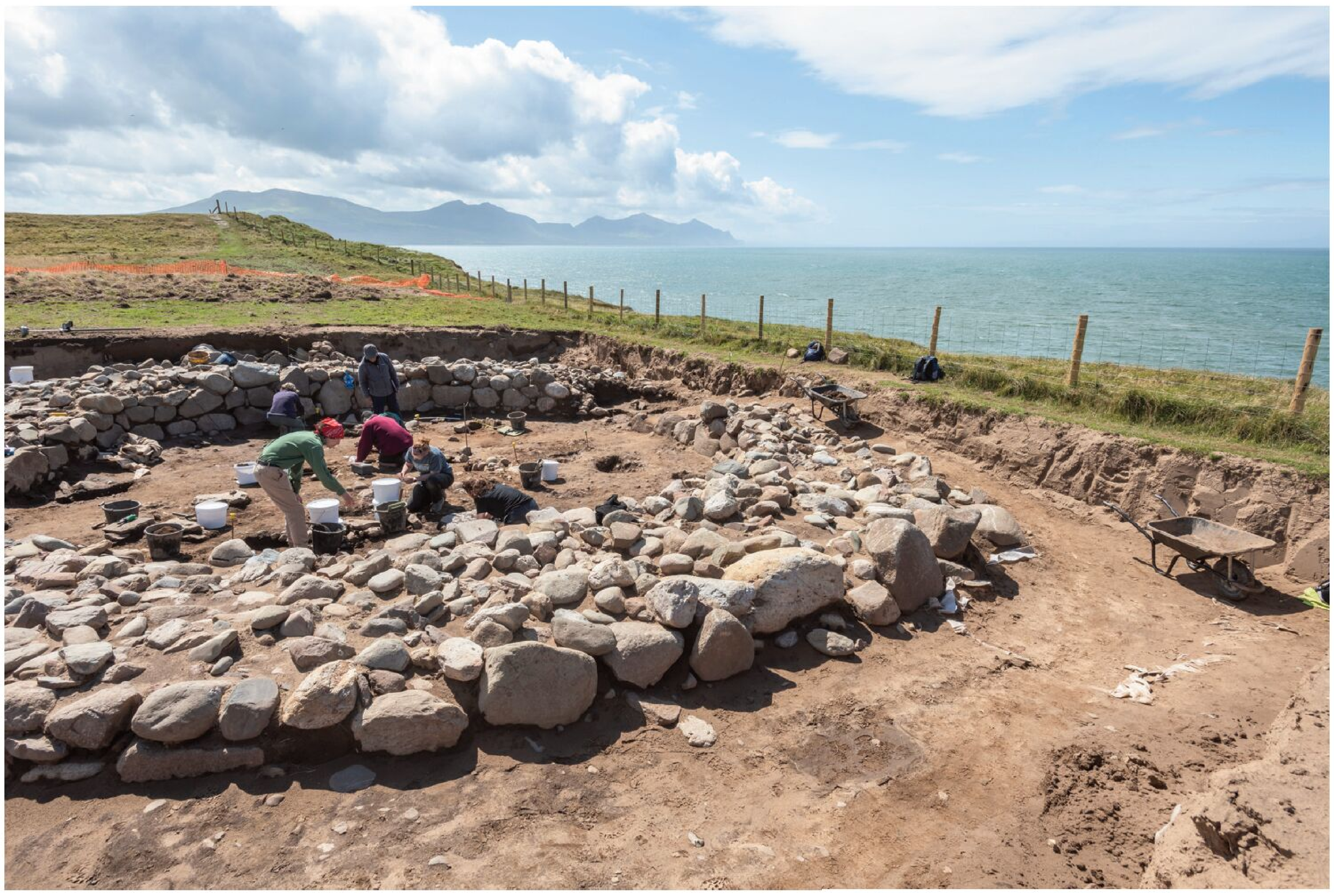
Nathalie continues: "Discoveries such as this one provide an extremely valuable insight into the religious beliefs and practices of the culturally mixed populations of the Roman provinces. Finding these kinds of

Top: First century Roman pot during reconstruction

Above: Worn fragments of decorated Roman Samian ware from Smallhythe

Right: Part of a roman tile stamped with Classis Britannica, the mark of the Roman fleet

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/PAUL HARRIS [3]



This page: Local volunteers working together with archaeologists carrying out excavations at the hillfort at Dinas Dinlle, Gwynedd

personal everyday possessions really helps to bring the story of a place to life for our visitors."

A race against time

Coastal archaeology presents one of the biggest challenges as climate change and coastal erosion threaten to erase what remains of past communities.

At Dinas Dinlle in Gwynedd, an Iron Age hillfort on rapidly eroding cliffs, National Trust and archaeologists from CHERISH (Climate, Heritage and Environments of Reefs, Islands, and Headlands) have been working to record and investigate the fort before it is lost – a familiar story along the 780 miles of National Trust coastline.

Kathy Laws, Trust archaeologist explains: "It's hard to say how much of the hillfort has already disappeared over the centuries, but we estimate that 20 to 40 metres (65 to 130ft) of the western side have been lost to the sea since 1900, so excavating and recording the site has been vital.

"However, the site posed challenges, as the banks and ditches that we wanted to study are now part of the cliff edge, requiring ropes to be rigged up for archaeologists to access the cliff face."

Some of the big discoveries during the project were the remains of a grand Iron Age roundhouse, and artefacts such as a quern stone used for hand-milling flour left behind by those who once lived there.

Objects found during the excavation are being analysed by Gwynedd Archaeology, who led the dig (since merged with the three other Welsh archaeological trusts to become Heneb: the Trust for Welsh Archaeology).

The research has allowed the full story of the site and its landscape to be captured and shared, from the first settlers to the intense storms of the Early Medieval period which led to the site's abandonment, and the much later Second World War airfield and defences.

"We hope by understanding what has gone before, we can find ways to help the landscape adapt to climate change, both here and at other coastal sites," continues Kathy.

"It is important to share what we have learnt with everyone who comes here. Instead of covering over the roundhouse after the excavation, the team agreed it should be stabilised and left exposed, for visitors to enjoy while it still survives."

A green recovery

Wallington in Northumberland has been the focus of considerable work to restore damage caused by intensive land management and the increased demand for forestry and food production, which have affected biodiversity, reduced water quality, and degraded peat soils.

These problems have been magnified by the climate crisis; these precious habitats have little resilience to adapt to extreme weather.

During Storm Arwen in 2021, Wallington's tree population was

NATIONAL TRUST/NATHALIE COHEN

Top: Intact Roman pot found during excavations at Smallhythe

Right: Fragment of a flagon dating 1st-mid 2nd century

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/JAMES DOBSON [2]

devastated when winds of up to 98 mph tore through the region and destroyed 40 hectares of trees. This presented a huge task of replanting trees but also an opportunity to commission a LiDAR survey to provide useful insights into where to carry out replanting as well as exploring Wallington's archaeology.

As the biggest LiDAR survey conducted by the National Trust to date, across 57 square kilometres, archaeologists were hopeful for some exciting archaeological discoveries, and they weren't disappointed. LiDAR uses the pulse from a laser to collect precise measurements between a light aircraft as it flies over the landscape and the ground, to produce a minutely detailed map of the ground surface. This has shown that there are surface archaeological remains over 60-70% of the estate's total area.

The initial analysis, concentrated on the area where the majority of the new trees are to be planted, has revealed fascinating details of Wallington's archaeology dating from 2000 BC to 1900 AD, including traces of historic, healthy woodlands from the mid-eighteenth century, which were cleared and not replanted.

Right: Mercury head, exacavated at Smallhythe

Below: A local volunteer carrying out excavations at the hillfort at Dinas Dinlle, Gwynedd

Findings of particular interest include early farming systems, which were cast aside in the eighteenth century by Wallington's previous owner Sir Walter Blackett, whose desire was to make way for 'rational' and efficient farming.

These include at least half a dozen different forms of 'ridge and furrow' cultivation which, together with the estate's documentary record, will help with dating other features in the landscape such as the field boundaries – the Northumberland 'cast' field banks – stonewalled to each side.

Previously recognised Iron Age 'camps', like mini-hillforts, estimated as dating from the centuries immediately prior to the Roman invasion, have been surveyed with greater precision to reveal more eroded outlying features, possible annexes to the main enclosures, and even suspected prehistoric pathways.

"The survey results are taking time to analyse, but they are revealing more and more about the past of Wallington's vast estate," says archaeologist Mark Newman. "The information is helping

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/PAUL HARRIS

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teams, funders, and partners to make critical decisions on where new trees, hedgerows, fences, and site access points should go, to minimise the impact on the landscape's archaeology.

By basing new planting plans on historic planting schemes, we can create more habitat benefits as well as restoring lost features of the historic environment."

Wallington has benefitted from funding for this work from Defra as part of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund which aims to kickstart the process of nature recovery, address the climate crisis, and help create and retain thousands of green jobs.

People power

Wicken Fen Nature Reserve in Cambridgeshire is one of Europe's most important wetlands and supports an abundance of wildlife.

It covers around 809 hectares (2,000) acres and is ideal for exploring and learning about the nature of the area, including a spectacular array of plants, birds, and dragonflies.

However, less than 1% of original fen survives in East Anglia, of which Wicken Fen is a fragment. Despite growing to 358 hectares (885 acres) by the end of the twentieth century, the nature reserve was too small and isolated to guarantee the survival of all of its rare and numerous species.

It was also under pressure from the increasing number of people seeking its peace and tranquillity.

Above: Boardwalk through the wetland at Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire

In 1999, the Wicken Fen Vision began: this is a 100-year plan to create a diverse landscape for wildlife, people, and carbon, a historic landscape that will provide space in the modern world to breathe, think and explore, and work in partnerships that will benefit people, climate, and nature.

As part of the Wicken Fen Vision, a three-year community engagement project 'Footprints', part-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was run to build and strengthen local people's connection with the Fen and its landscape through a series of archaeological events and activities.

Working in collaboration with Oxford Archaeology and Dr Steve Boreham, this included: the recruitment of 10 volunteers, to provide a holistic training experience in archaeological fieldwalking, test pitting, finds processing, and palaeo-environmental augering.

The aim was to use archaeology to strengthen the participants' passion for the landscape and its history, and how they connect natural and cultural heritage. In turn, the volunteers could then take their learning and enthusiasm to their wider community networks.

"The 'hands-on' qualities of archaeological work and processes really allows people to find tangible ways to connect to the past," says archaeologist Shannon Hogan.

"Guided by experts in the prehistory and geo-archaeology of the Fens, we were able to focus on the interplay between natural environment and human activity, and the ways in which we can learn about both in a mutually beneficial approach.

"The overwhelming positivity from these volunteers and the ways in which they expressed their new-found understanding of the history and significance of the fenland has been incredibly rewarding to witness. This is something we hope we can encourage and grow."

To find out more about archaeology at the National Trust and how you can get involved visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Below: Footprints community engagement, Reach24 Bioblitz, Bird Tour at Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire

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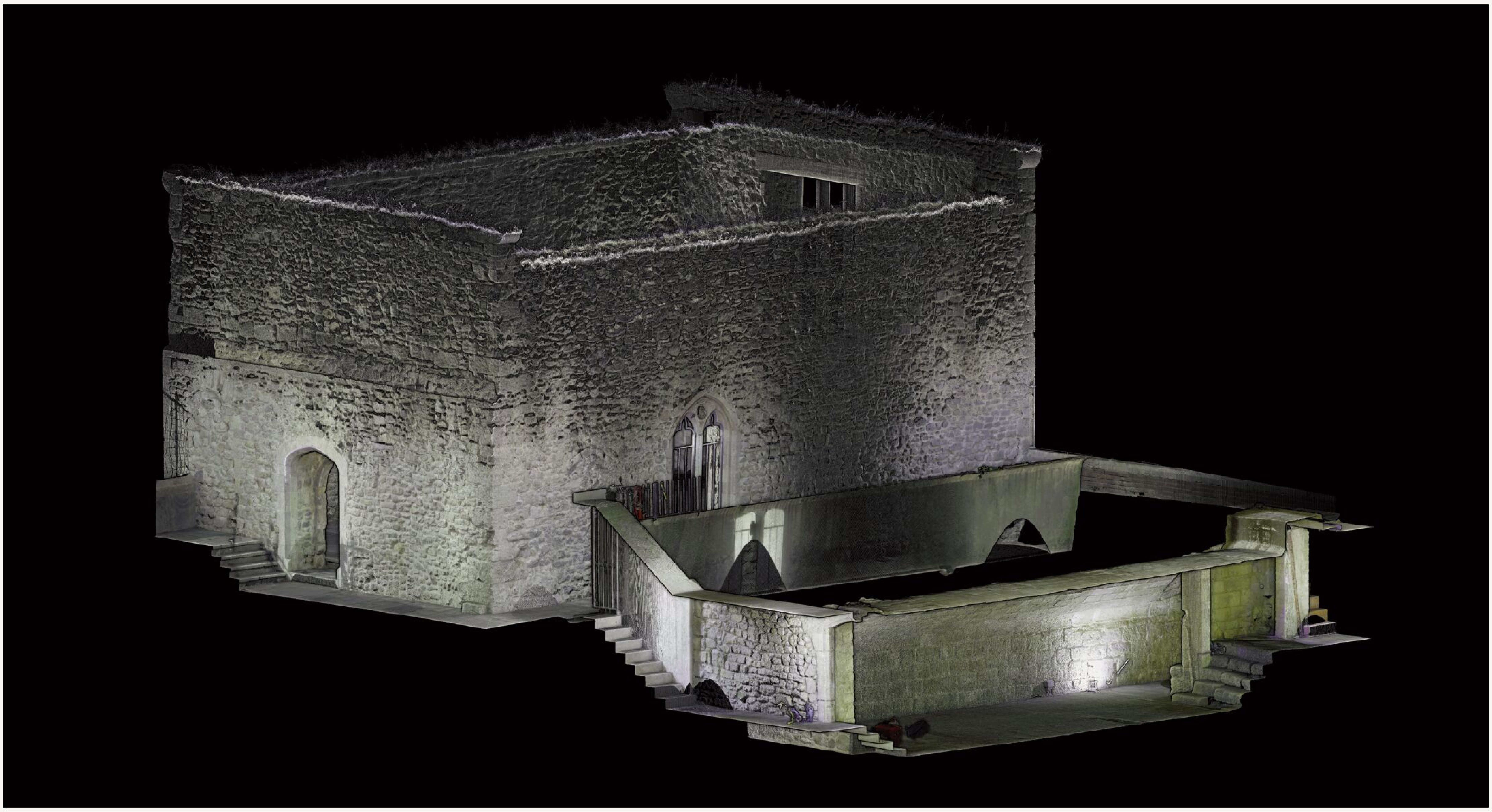

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL, 2024

Digital frontiers in medieval Southampton

Felix Pedrotti, Michael Grant, Kristian Strutt, Neil Cooper and Samuel Pegg, University of Southampton and Richard Henry and Jo Bailey, Southampton City Council, explain how digital technology is revealing fresh perspectives on this port city.

In an era of rapid technological advancement, especially in 3D modelling and the rise of digital replicas (virtual representations of an object or system designed to reflect a physical object accurately), practitioners of archaeology are augmenting traditional methods of recording - such as 2D line drawings and paper-based survey plans with digital recording.

These innovative tools have revolutionised how archaeologists, historians and conservators explore, document, and interpret the past.

The *Bringing Heritage to Life* project at the University of Southampton has utilised this technology to reinterpret the medieval townscape of Southampton, offering new insights to the field of archaeology, while bringing audiences closer - almost within touching distance - to past environments through innovative digital storytelling.

Cutting-edge 3D modelling allows us to create highly detailed, interactive replicas of archaeological finds and sites, from individual artefacts to entire landscapes, offering unparalleled new insights. With this technology, we can digitally preserve and reconstruct complex historical buildings, visualise stratigraphic layers, and recreate fragile or incomplete objects in ways that were once unimaginable.

These digital models not only safeguard heritage but also bring it to life for both scholars and the public. Through virtual platforms and immersive experiences, archaeology has never been more accessible, allowing anyone to explore these discoveries, creating a more engaging and accessible connection to the past.

What makes digital models particularly powerful is their dynamic nature. These can evolve in real time as we gather new information, allowing continuous study and analysis without the need for physical intervention.

This fusion of archaeology and digital innovation is reshaping how we study and share heritage, creating opportunities for deeper exploration and broader engagement. In this article, we dive into a groundbreaking project that leverages 3D modelling technologies to reimagine medieval Southampton.

Through modern digital storytelling and intricate highly detailed models, the project offers a fresh and immersive way to experience Southampton's rich medieval heritage.

Above: The team from the University of Southampton using a Leica RTC360 laser scanner to create a precise 3D model of Southampton's Medieval Wall

Opposite: A laser scan of the Weigh House, including the adjacent vault (AR Trigger Image)

This approach demonstrates how technological advancements are not only transforming archaeological practices but also making history more accessible and alive than ever before.

As with many archaeological projects, this one began with a simple phone call on a cold day in December 2021. The request was straightforward: create a 3D model of the Weigh House, a historic building on French Street in Southampton's Old Town.

Constructed in the mid-thirteenth century and primarily known as a Peysage or Poysage House (from the Old French peser, meaning 'to weigh'), the Weigh House was a place where merchandise, particularly wool, was weighed to determine customs duties before being shipped from Southampton to ports across Europe.

Although restored once in the 1930s, the Weigh House was heavily damaged during the Southampton Blitz during Second World War. The conservation work on the structure in 2021 and 2022 marked the most comprehensive restoration work since the damage endured during the Blitz.

Before embarking on this restoration, which could have resulted in significant changes to the building's structure, Southampton City Council approached the University of Southampton for assistance to produce a digital model of the site. The reason for this request was straightforward: archaeologists have increasingly adopted 3D recording technologies as a cost-effective and accurate method for recording historic buildings.

These 3D models can enhance visualisation and analysis of structures to promote a deeper understanding of architectural features and construction techniques, further aiding in the preservation of sites threatened by environmental factors and urban development, capturing detailed information before it is altered, renovated, or even lost.

Additionally, the use of 3D modelling fosters interdisciplinary collaboration among fields such as architecture, engineering, and computer science, enriching the analysis and interpretation of archaeological data. With this data in hand Southampton City Council would be able to maintain a digital record for preservation, monitoring, and surveying.

Cultural collaborators

But why did the Council reach out to us specifically? Over several years the Department of Archaeology at the University of Southampton had been collaborating with the Council and their Archaeology Unit to facilitate placement of postgraduate students, allowing them to gain hands-on experience in archaeology.

In 2021, the Department of Archaeology had received a significant CapCo–AHRC infrastructure grant, enabling them to purchase new equipment for various survey

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applications, including ground-penetrating radar, DSLR cameras, and commercial uncrewed aerial vehicles like the Matrice 300 RTK.

This equipment helped the department in numerous prior research projects, and our thoughts turned to undertaking research and scholarship in Southampton. This coincided with Southampton City Council's Heritage Assets Repair Programme focused on preserving the heritage of the city for future generations.

One of the tools acquired through the funding was a Leica RTC 360 Laser Scanner, which allowed us to document and capture environments in 3D.

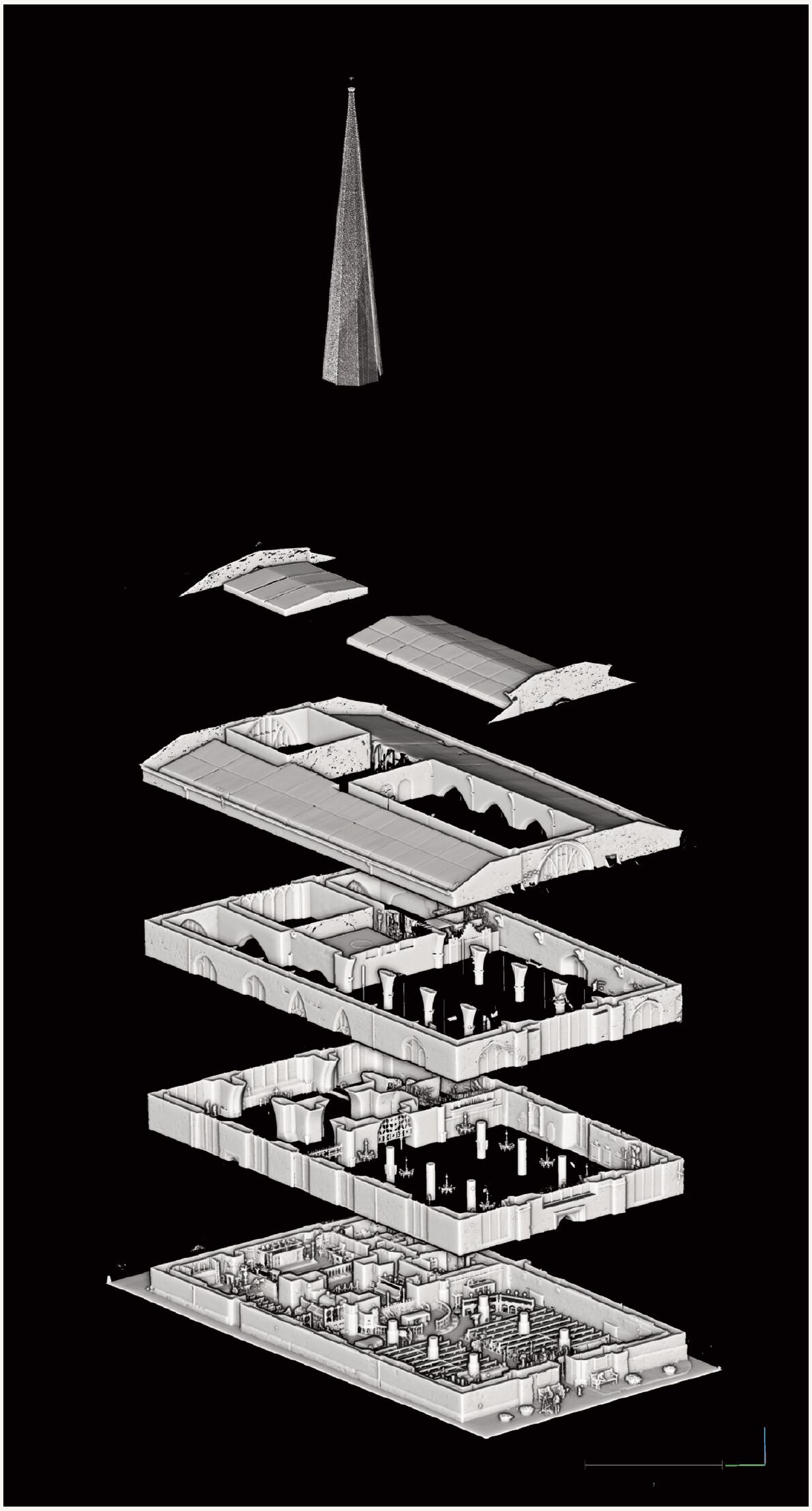
A laser scanner works by emitting a rapidly pulsing or continuous laser beam that rotates around its vertical axis, resulting in a systematic sweeping of the beam across the area as the scanner slowly rotates.

When the beam hits an object, some of its energy bounces back to the scanner where a sensor detects it and calculates the distance and angle from where that energy bounced back from.

The scanner can then calculate a coordinate for where that object was in relation to the scanner which, when combined with millions of other returns, can create a highly detailed representation of the surrounding area known as a point cloud.

Combining scans from different overlapping locations allows complex 3D models of an entire building to be created. With the laser scanner, it is possible to digitally scan an entire building within a few hours.

During the scanning process, all involved parties quickly realised how fruitful this collaboration could be – the University having access to such a remarkable set of medieval buildings on their doorstep that were ideal for research and student training, and the Council having access to the digital datasets generated from the work.



Right: An exploded view of St Michael's Church, the oldest building still in use in Southampton, dating from 1070

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL, 2024

The Bargate: A gateway to history

Over the following months, this collaboration strengthened, and it quickly became obvious just how many historic buildings, many of which are subterranean, exist within Southampton's Old Town and yet are rarely seen by the public.

Some, like the renowned Bargate, are highly visible though rarely open (especially since Covid-19), while others such as the West Gate, with its beautiful attached Merchant's Hall, are in use but in a quieter part of the Old Town. Few visitors are aware of the numerous vaults throughout the city that are also difficult to access.

Our growing awareness and appreciation of these buildings only deepened our desire to scan the various medieval locations spread across Southampton, in turn providing unique opportunities for our students to work within these environments to develop their practical training and work on their own research, to further develop their skills and expertise for their future careers.

From 2022 to 2024, a team of staff and 20 archaeology undergraduate and postgraduate students were trained in digital archaeological recording techniques, scanning 25 historic buildings, both inside and out, as well as 14 underground vaults across the city.

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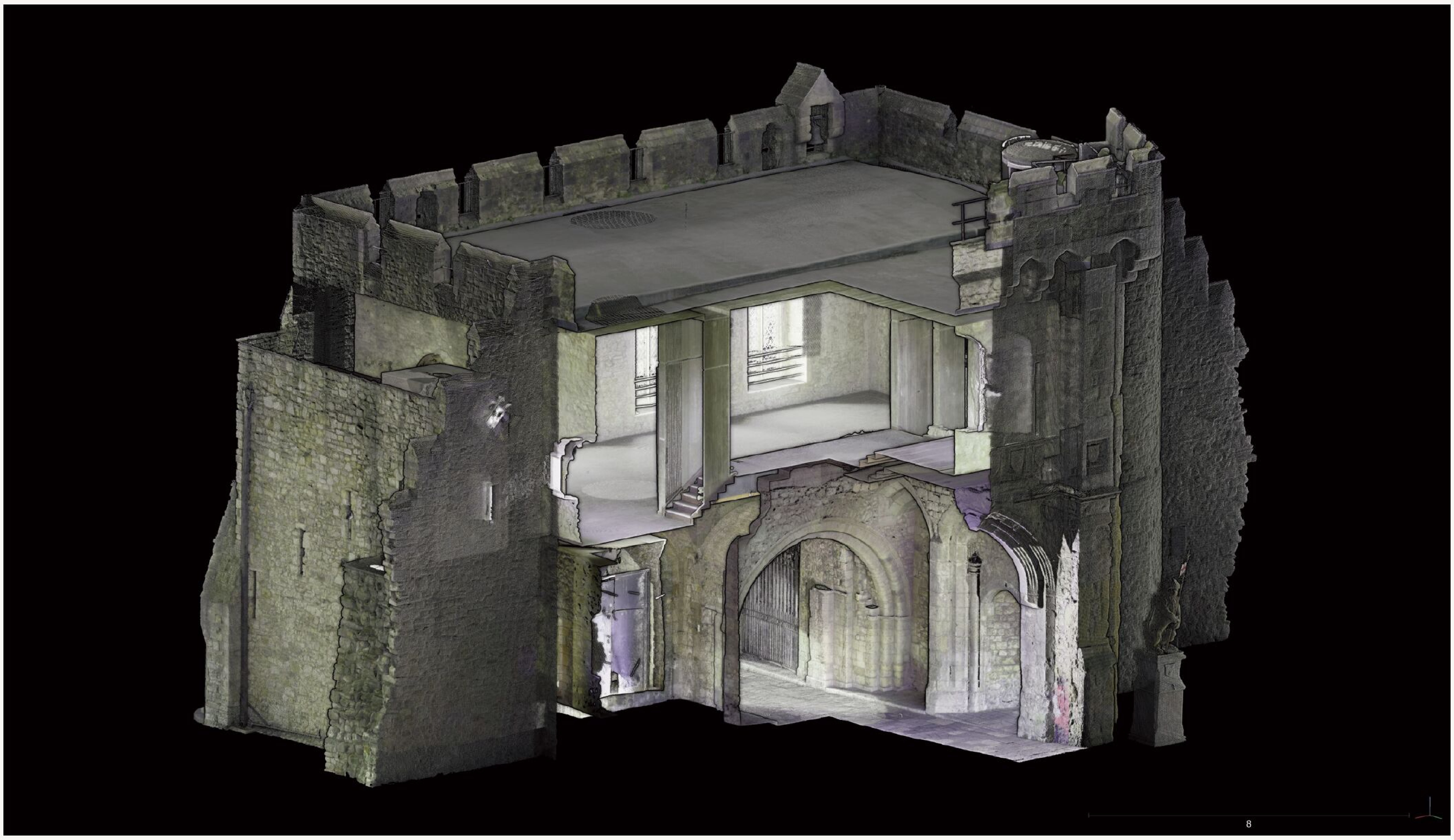


Above and below: By using laser scanners, the project team can "cut" the digital models in section to better understand the construction of the buildings (AR Trigger Image)

These included some of the city's most iconic scheduled buildings such as the Bargate, the northern gatehouse of medieval Southampton, and St Michael's Church, Southampton's oldest functioning building constructed in 1070.

Nikolaus Pevsner, the respected architectural historian, wrote that Southampton's Bargate 'is probably the finest, and certainly the most complex, town gateway in Britain'.

Originally constructed in c.1180, the Bargate witnessed numerous changes and upgrades throughout its history. For example, in 1290 large drum towers and a first floor were built, and in 1400 the embattled front and a roof-top gun platform were added.

During this time the Bargate had a dual purpose, acting as a main entrance to the medieval town, and most notably as a prison to detain Genoese prisoners of war after an attack on an English trading expedition, and later was used as the town guildhall, criminal and leet court.

Over the following centuries, the Bargate underwent further structural changes. During the late 19th century, the Bargate was seen as a hindrance rather than an asset, with the medieval gateway seen as too small to permit access into the town. This became a more pressing issue with the advent of the motor car and arrival of the tram. During the early twentieth century there were repeated calls for the complete demolition of the Bargate.

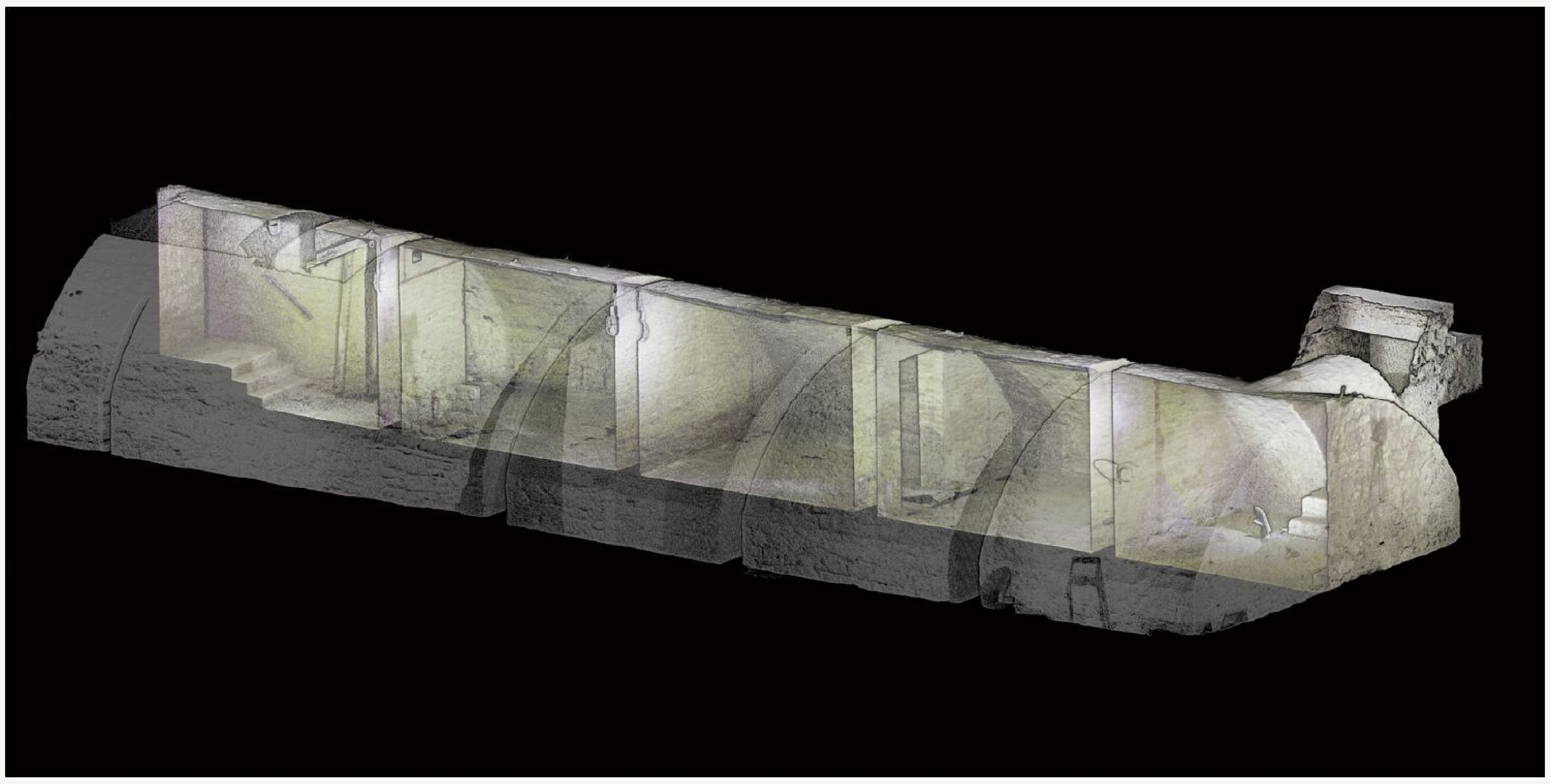
Despite many attempts, these plans were withdrawn, saving the Bargate and leading to the bespoke design of a unique enclosed double deck tram in 1923 with a rounded top and smaller wheels that would fit through the Bargate archway.

However, this didn't resolve the ongoing issue of traffic. Eventually in 1932, the wall immediately east of the Bargate was demolished to create a new road and the western wall was demolished in 1937, leaving the Bargate isolated on an island in the middle of a large roundabout (Bargate Circus). This arrangement remained until pedestrianisation of the High Street began on the east side in the early 1990s.

The results of the laser scan of the Bargate reveal for the first time the detailed structural elements that make up this complex building, allowing the layers to be stripped away to reveal some of the original twelfth and thirteenth century features that are now hidden, or largely obscured, by the fifteenth century and later additions.

A hidden past

While scanning Southampton's fascinating medieval buildings, it quickly became apparent that many locations accessible to us as archaeologists are



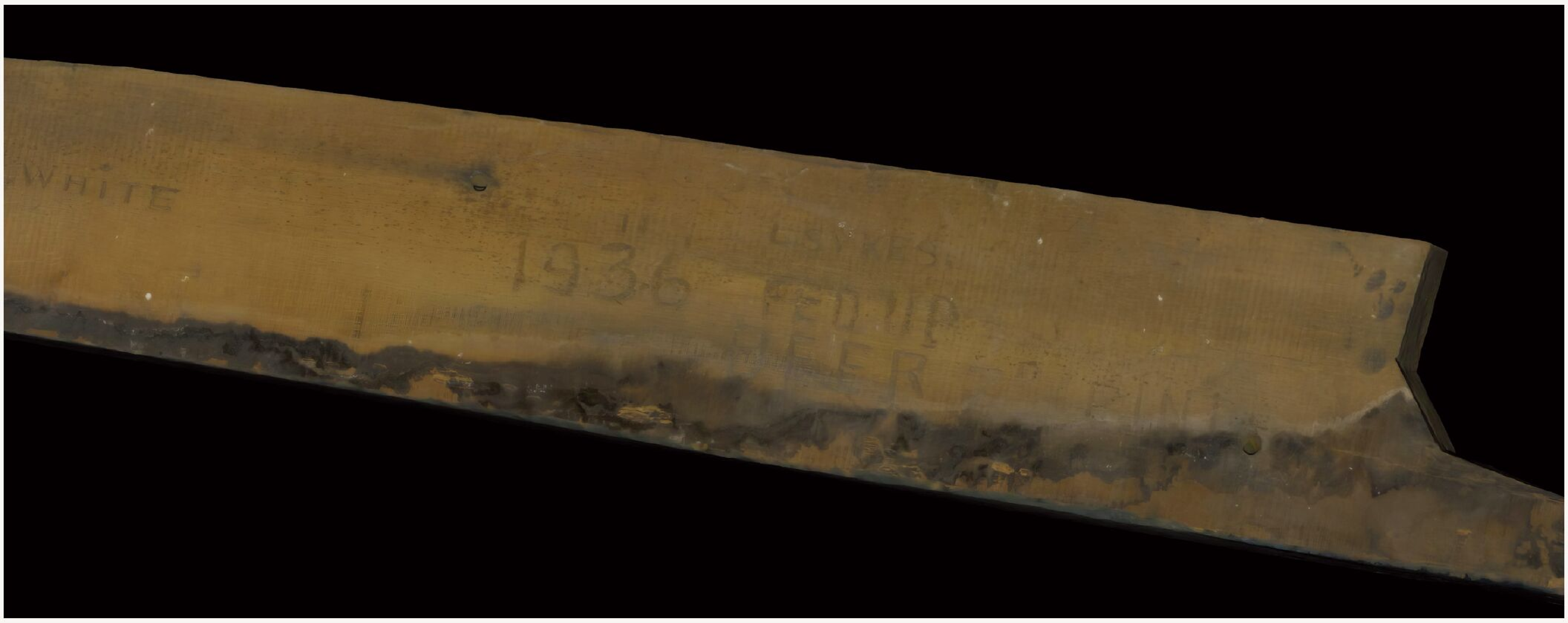
not similarly available to the public. Barriers to accessibility may be as simple as a building closed for public access or perhaps repurposed for functions such as wedding venues or other private event spaces.

Medieval buildings may also lack the ability to be adapted for access by those with reduced mobility due to the uneven floors, narrow passageways, or steep staircases, while others might be inaccessible to the public due to the structural integrity of the building or other health and safety limitations.

A prime example is St Michael's Prison Vault, located near St. Michael's Church and known to date to at least the fifteenth century. Written records highlight that a tenement was 'built over the prison of the Mayor and Commonality of the Town of Southampton' leading to its current name of the Prison Vault, though it is uncertain whether it was ever used as such.

During the Second World War, this vault, along with many others within the city, was converted into an air raid shelter. The Prison Vault is the only one in the city to have retained the added baffle (brick partition) walls.

Below: A carving on a wooden beam, found during the restoration process within Tudor House, shows a complaint by Southampton locals about rising beer prices in the early twentieth century



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These walls were installed so that if a bomb were dropped on part of the vault, shrapnel would be deflected away from other sections of the vault, minimising damage to the structure and reducing fatalities and injuries of other occupants seeking shelter from wartime air raids.

Due to its complex layout, the vault poses significant safety hazards for visitors, as it has limited airflow therefore offering minimal access at any time. Thus, the Prison Vault is infrequently visited by the city tour guides, yet it offers a unique look at how the vaults were converted into air raid shelters, offering a real insight into the claustrophobic conditions of having to spend many nights sheltering within these during the height of the Southampton Blitz.

The digital clone of this vault offers unprecedented access to all, enabling people for the first time to see and explore this unique underground space.

Sic Parvis Magna: Greatness from small beginnings

When considering the medieval history of any town, it is natural to focus on the large iconic buildings associated with it, but these only tell a small part of the story. The most unique and interesting stories are linked with objects that might be buried away within museum archives, rarely seen on public display and often only identifiable through a short text-based description on a collections list.

There has been a drive to remove intellectual, physical, and cultural barriers and facilitate access to these collections and objects, with the rise of digital curation being an important part of this.

Digital curation refers to the process of collecting, organising, and maintaining digital assets like images, videos, and documents. In the context of heritage organisations, digital curation involves preserving digital records of historical and cultural significance, making sure that future generations can access and learn from these resources.

3D laser scanning can form an important digital curation tool as it permits a digital clone of an object to be created and shared with a larger audience, but still retains the curator's knowledge and experience in the centre of the creative process, allowing them to group, contextualise, and share this digital content.

This was one of the key opportunities identified through the partnership between the University of Southampton and Southampton City Council: Increasing accessibility to the thousands of artefacts kept within Southampton City Council's museum collections stores.

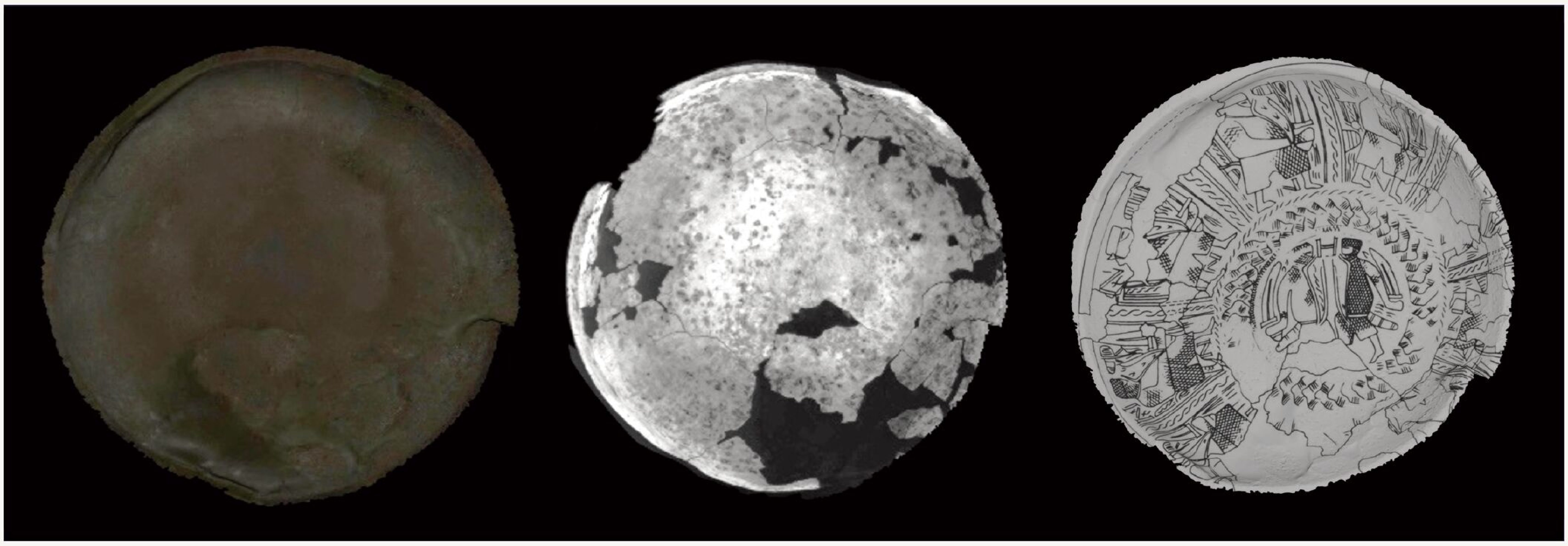
Through close collaboration with the Council's Curator of Archaeology, objects with unique and intriguing stories were identified that could further benefit from the adoption of digital curation.

To achieve this, University students were offered a placement within the Council's Cultural Services team to learn and gain hands-on experience of the curatorial process.

The students also undertook digital 3D recording, using a structured light scanner. A structured light scanner works by projecting a patterned light onto an object, with the in-built camera system recording the distortions of this pattern, which is converted into precise 3D surface measurements, along with colour-accurate recording of the object thanks to the camera system.

This technology allows the creation of digital 3D models of the objects in the collection, adding another dimension to the curation process while making artefacts accessible to the public online.

Over the past two years, our team has scanned more than 200 objects from



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Above: A 3D model of a medieval bowl (left) alongside its X-ray results (centre). When both are combined, features of the bowl that would otherwise be hidden from view are revealed (right) (AR Trigger Image)

these collections, published online through the Southampton Cultural Services' Sketchfab account, a platform often described as a social media site for 3D models.

Many of these objects include ceramics, sculptures, and seals from historic documents. Some are unique, such as the remains of a wooden beam installed at Tudor House in 1936, featuring a complaint about the rising price of beer in local pubs.

This message was carved by Laurence Sykes and J. White during its renovation protesting that beer was 7 pence a pint, marking the first price increase in years. As this beam was part of the building's internal structure, the hidden protest remained undiscovered for almost 70 years, only coming to light during further renovations in 2001.

Upon its discovery, the *Daily Echo* was able to trace the daughters of Laurence Sykes, Marion Bolger and Shelagh Ryan, who recounted that they still remembered their father's story about the hidden message and had often wondered if the carving would ever be found. 3D modelling of individual objects allows us to uncover deeper insights into their history, shape, and craftsmanship – revealing details that might otherwise go unnoticed.

A perfect example is a medieval decorated bowl that, at first glance, may seem unremarkable. However, when scanned using 3D technology, hidden intricacies are revealed.

This particular bowl was discovered in 1973 during an excavation on Upper Bugle Street, where archaeologists were investigating a disused well between two merchants' houses.

Wells often become time capsules, filled with discarded items that offer a glimpse into daily life. In this case, alongside typical rubbish like broken pottery and animal bones, archaeologists found two twelfth century broken bowls, one neatly stacked on top of the other.

During conservation, the top bowl featured exceptionally fine engravings – so delicate that they are barely visible to the naked eye. This poses a challenge when trying to display the bowl, as its true beauty is difficult for visitors to appreciate in person. The bowl is 32 cm in diameter, with incredibly fine engravings depicting armed knights.

These intricate details, almost invisible at first glance, reveal its true artistry when digital imagery is applied. Crafted from hammered brass in the Lower Rhine region of Germany, this bowl is a rare find – one of only 11 discovered in England.

Thanks to 3D modelling coupled with an X-ray of the bowl, we were able to enhance these hidden features and offer a new perspective on an object that might otherwise seem plain and unremarkable.

This technology not only brings history to life but also allows us to explore and share the stories behind these remarkable artefacts in ways that traditional display methods cannot.

Bringing digital heritage to the masses

Digital scanning of these buildings and objects is only the first stage – finding ways to share this effectively with the public is equally important.

A key aspiration of Southampton City Council has been to significantly increase public awareness and engagement with the city's heritage. According to public figures from 2023, approximately 255,000 people live in Southampton, with the University of Southampton and Solent University combined having around 37,000 students. In the same year, the Port of Southampton welcomed approximately 460 cruise ships, carrying about 2.6 million passengers.

Together with the commercial port located to the west, these activities contributed around £1 billion to the local and regional economy.

However, many transient tourists and local residents are only somewhat aware of Southampton's rich heritage. This issue is highlighted in Southampton's *Destination Management Plan 2021–2031*, which points out a latent opportunity, stating that visitors 'know little about our assets or experiences, and international visitors have no grasp of the richness of our heritage and our stories'.

This awareness inspired us to find new ways to bring Southampton's heritage to locals, passing tourists, and other visitors to the Old Town by utilising the digital datasets that we had been creating.

During this time, we were fortunate that the Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH) opened applications for the Higher Education and Innovation Fund (HEIF), which is designed to foster collaboration by building core knowledge exchange capacity within universities in England.

Research England, part of UKRI, oversees HEIF, and the allocations are used by universities to support various commercialisation and innovation activities.

Without hesitation, we reached out to Southampton City Council and partnered with them to create a unique project aimed at increasing access to and awareness of the history and narratives of medieval Southampton.

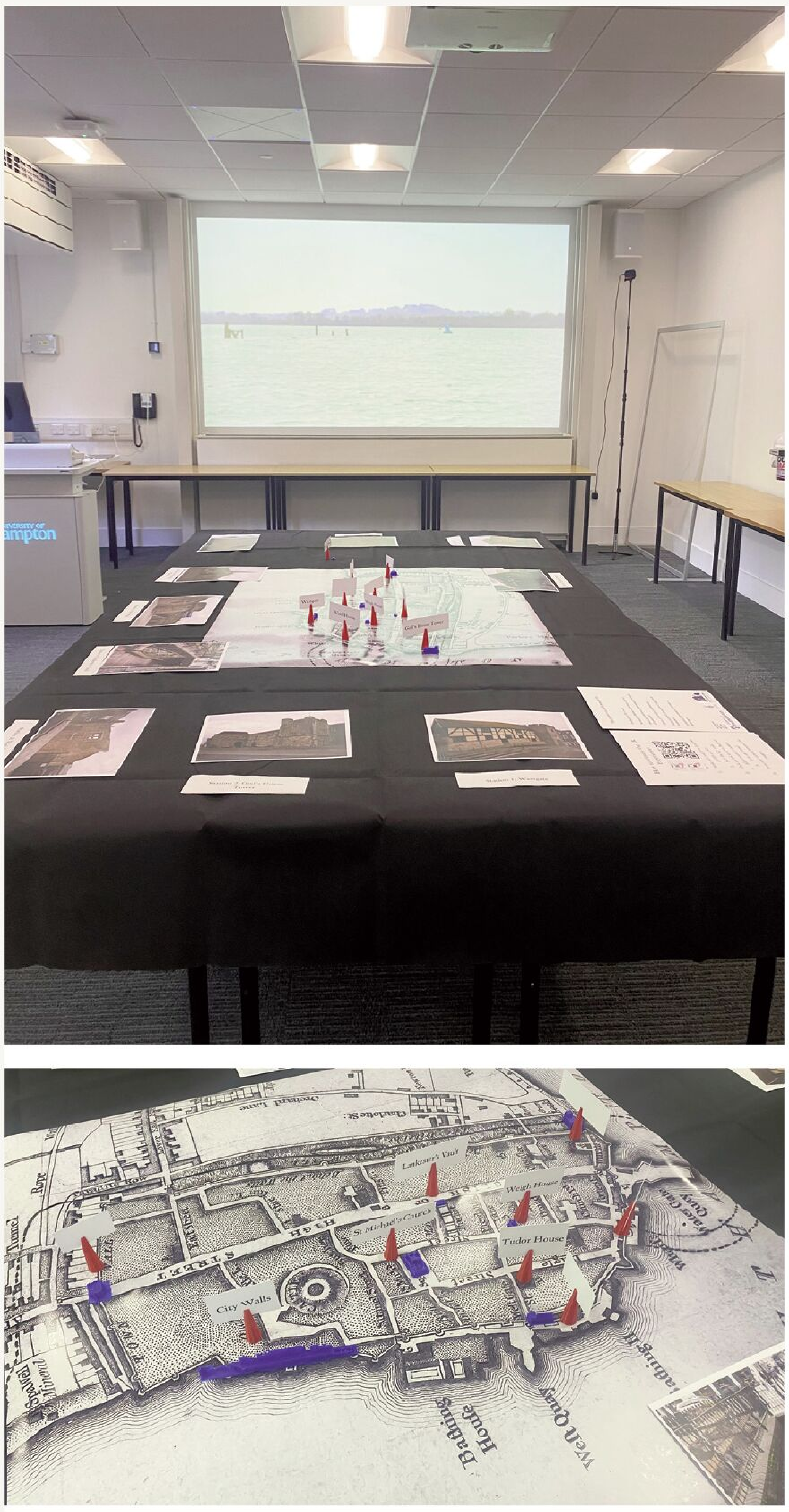
Over the past two years we had been experimenting with a series of different online and in-person digital platforms to engage the public. One method that really captured the public imagination was the use of augmented reality (AR).

At two large public events within Southampton – the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival (SOTSEF) and Southampton Heritage Open Days – we developed an AR experience where visitors could use their phones to explore some of these 3D models.

The latter, which took place inside the Bargate during the national Heritage Open Days, garnered significant attention, making headlines in the local news for its cutting-edge approach to delivering heritage information to the public. Both events were remarkably successful, with over 4,000 interactions.

Both the in-person events and the online material demonstrated a strong public interest in Southampton's rich historical heritage and a desire to engage with it.

Below: Laser scanning medieval Southampton allowed us to recreate 3D prints of the digital assets and create engaging augmented reality experiences, which we presented at the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival in 2023 and 2024



FELIX PEDROTTI, 2023.

These in-person events also provided an in-depth understanding of the likely user demographics, notably age and digital competency levels, and perceived barriers to technology. Many users were resistant to installing an additional app on their device, with a wide range of different devices being owned. It became very clear that web-based augmented reality (webAR) would be the best way to deliver an AR experience to a large audience.

In addition, while the events were very successful and well received, constant feedback received was that these were location/event only experiences and people wanted to be able to share these experiences with their friends and family who couldn't attend, or simply be able to revisit and enjoy the experience at their own leisure.

Therefore, the new project needed to expand accessibility to these digital datasets by harnessing the power of webAR within a format that wouldn't be tied to a single public event. WebAR also has the distinct advantages of greater cross-platform compatibility and permitting enhanced testing and instant deployment on mobile web browsers. Two methods of implementing the AR were designed and tested.

A failed attempt: From GPS dead-spots to technological barriers

The first initiative involved designing an AR self-guided tour of Southampton. The concept was straightforward: Create a web-based experience that provided people passing through the city with access to a map featuring medieval structures as interactive hotspots.

Each point on the map came with images and a brief description of the locations. When users approached within 25 metres of a historical site, they would be prompted to use their phone's camera to virtually "enter" the building or structure, allowing them to explore the area through AR.

This feature enabled users to move their phone around and virtually experience key locations across Southampton, making it an immersive and educational tool. However, while the concept was engaging and had significant educational potential, there were several challenges that hindered its full realisation. One of the main obstacles was the inconsistent mobile coverage and dead spots throughout Southampton, which affected the AR experience's performance.

Additionally, barriers for end-users, such as varying levels of comfort with mobile technology, and concerns about engaging local communities, created further challenges in securing buy-in from the target demographic. These combined factors made it difficult to bring this aspect of the project to life, despite its innovative promise.

Knowing Southampton: A road to success

While the AR tour showed significant promise, it was limited by a series of technical challenges that at times were insurmountable especially for the target audience. Further feedback was received during a series of test events across the city and a simpler, easier to engage with, solution was developed that had positive buy-in from the target audience.

We developed a concept where postcards would serve as interactive triggers for our 3D models and the stories behind them. Each postcard featured two sides: One side included the standard area for addresses and information, complete with a QR code that, along with simple instructions, guided users to access the AR experience on their mobile device. The reverse side displayed the AR trigger, which activated the model for digital viewing.

We focused on seven specific historical sites and objects within Southampton, creating individual postcards for each. For instance, one of the highlights is the Castle Vault, a fascinating structure built around 1180 and one of the largest and oldest vaults in Southampton.

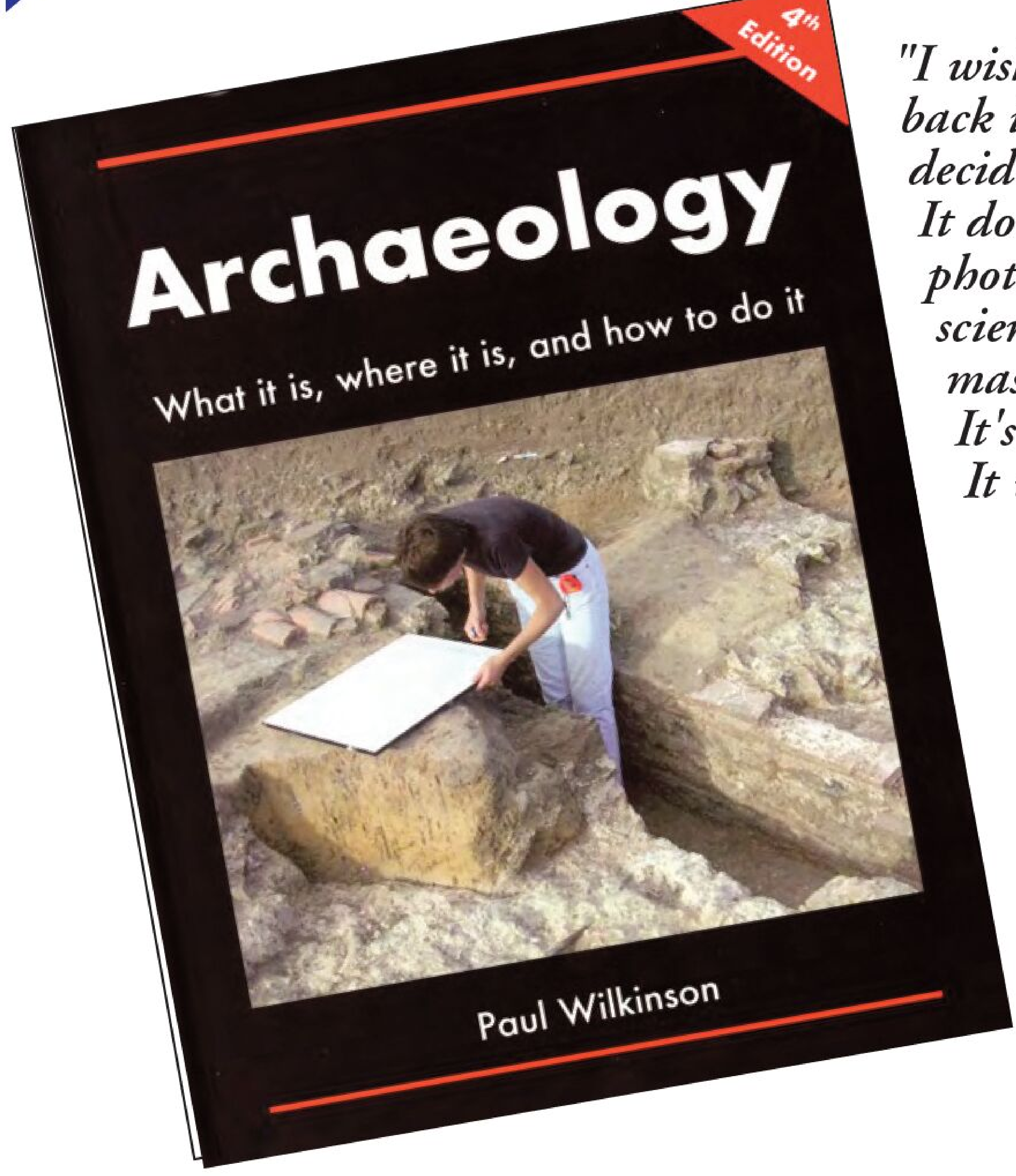
Initially used to store the king's wine during a time when the port thrived on the wine trade, it allowed ships to offload casks directly onto the quay outside the vault, thanks to the proximity of the water to the town walls during the medieval period.

With this AR experience, users can not only explore the exterior façade of the medieval walls but also delve deeper into the vault itself. When accessing the model, they can discover door and window openings carved into the thick walls and see how the vault served as an air raid shelter during the Second World War.

4th Edition

“A very useful introduction to archaeology”

Mick Aston



"I wish this book had been available when I started out in archaeology back in the 1960s. It tells you everything you need to know in order to decide what sort of archaeology you'd like to learn more about. It doesn't just deal with digging; instead it introduces you to aerial photography, geophysics, surveying, recording, finds processing, soil science and how to take samples - in fact all the subjects you'll need to master if you want to become a field archaeologist. It's well written and beautifully illustrated in full colour throughout. It would be cheap at twice the price!"

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Traces of the blast walls and remnants of the entrance and toilet facilities are still visible, enriching the user's understanding of the site's layered history. This innovative blend of traditional postcards and augmented reality not only enhances the exploration of Southampton's medieval heritage but also connects the city's past to a broader audience, inviting everyone to discover the stories that lie within its historic walls and to share these with a wider audience – not just those visiting the city itself.

All the challenges encountered in our initial attempt were effectively resolved with our new approach. Since users could access the postcards from the comfort of their own homes, mobile coverage and phone data use became a non-issue, allowing for stable internet connections.

For the postcards to function, we designed the web-based software to utilise the front of the postcard as a trigger. This meant we didn't need to rely on mobile device sensors like the Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU), which combines an accelerometer and gyroscope to detect movements and measure acceleration and rotational speeds. Instead, users could easily access the experience on a broader range of mobile devices, including older ones.

Moreover, while our earlier AR experience could have been perceived as competition for Southampton's tour guides, the postcards were warmly welcomed and tour guides expressed interest in actively promoting and distributing them to their groups.

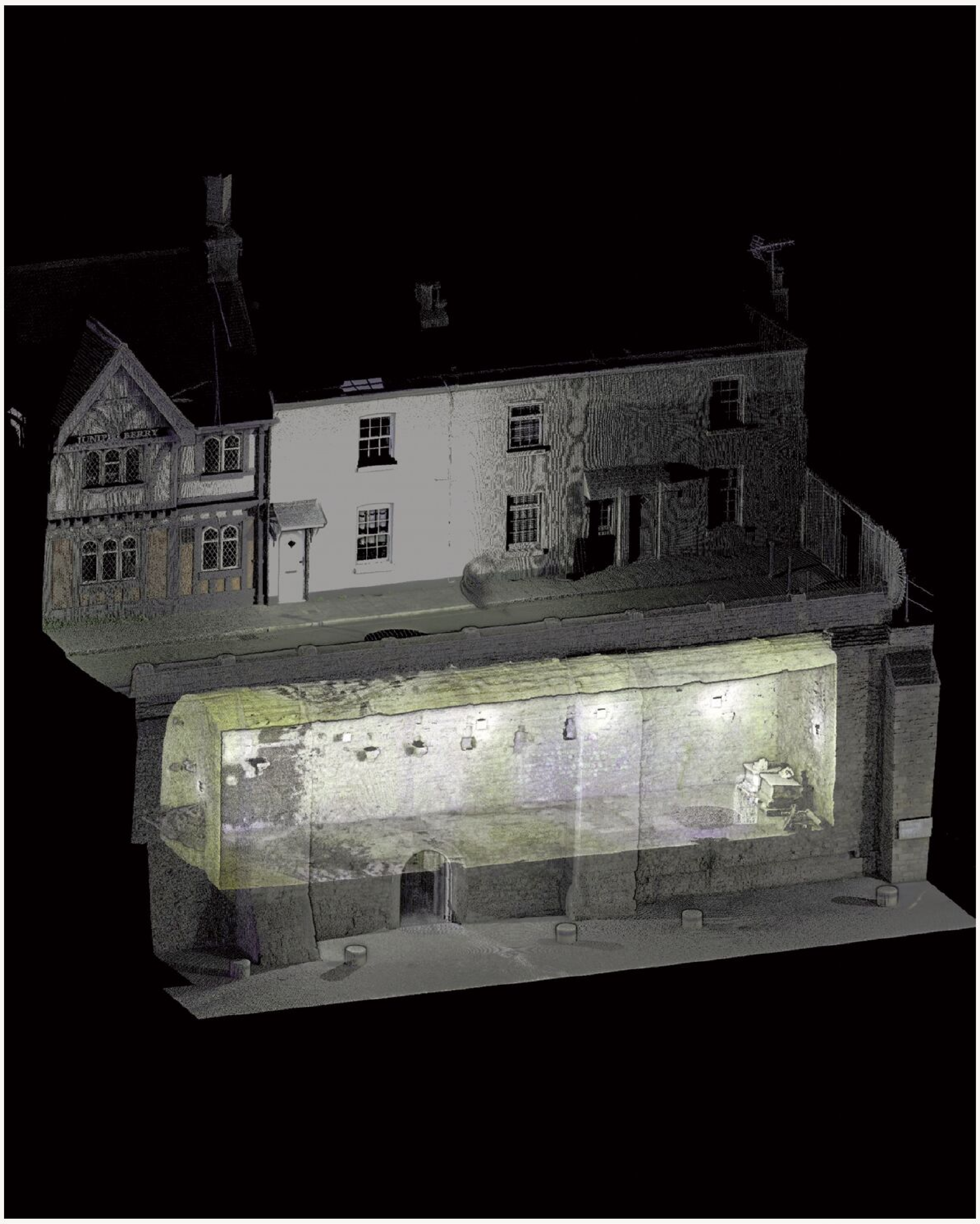
These AR postcards served as delightful gifts for tourists and local residents alike, adding an interactive layer to traditional souvenirs. By creating a unique way for visitors to engage with the city's history, the postcards enhanced their experience rather than detracted from the invaluable work of local guides.

This shift not only allowed us to overcome our previous setbacks but also fostered a sense of community and exploration within Southampton.

A concluding experience

The AR experience officially launched in early September, with postcards distributed to various venues throughout Southampton, including museums, tour guides, cafes, restaurants, and galleries like the John Hansard Gallery.

Right: This image shows the Castle Vault hidden within the medieval walls of Southampton (AR Trigger Image)



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The response to this project has been overwhelmingly positive. Since the rollout, approximately 3,000 people have engaged with the AR experience across multiple platforms, granting them access to the individual 3D models.

This tangible success reflects not only interest in Southampton's rich history but also the innovative way the project has connected to the past through modern technology.

By placing these postcards in accessible locations, it has been easier for locals and visitors alike to explore the city's medieval heritage in an interactive and engaging manner, truly bringing history to life.

These postcards, in conjunction with the now extensive and expansive online collection of 3D models hosted on the Southampton Cultural Services Sketchfab account are radically transforming how the public can access and engage with the medieval history of Southampton, beckoning a new chapter in digital curation for the city's heritage.

Well-known and beloved iconic sites are accessible in a way formerly impossible, while new sites and objects with their own stories are now waiting to be discovered for the first time.

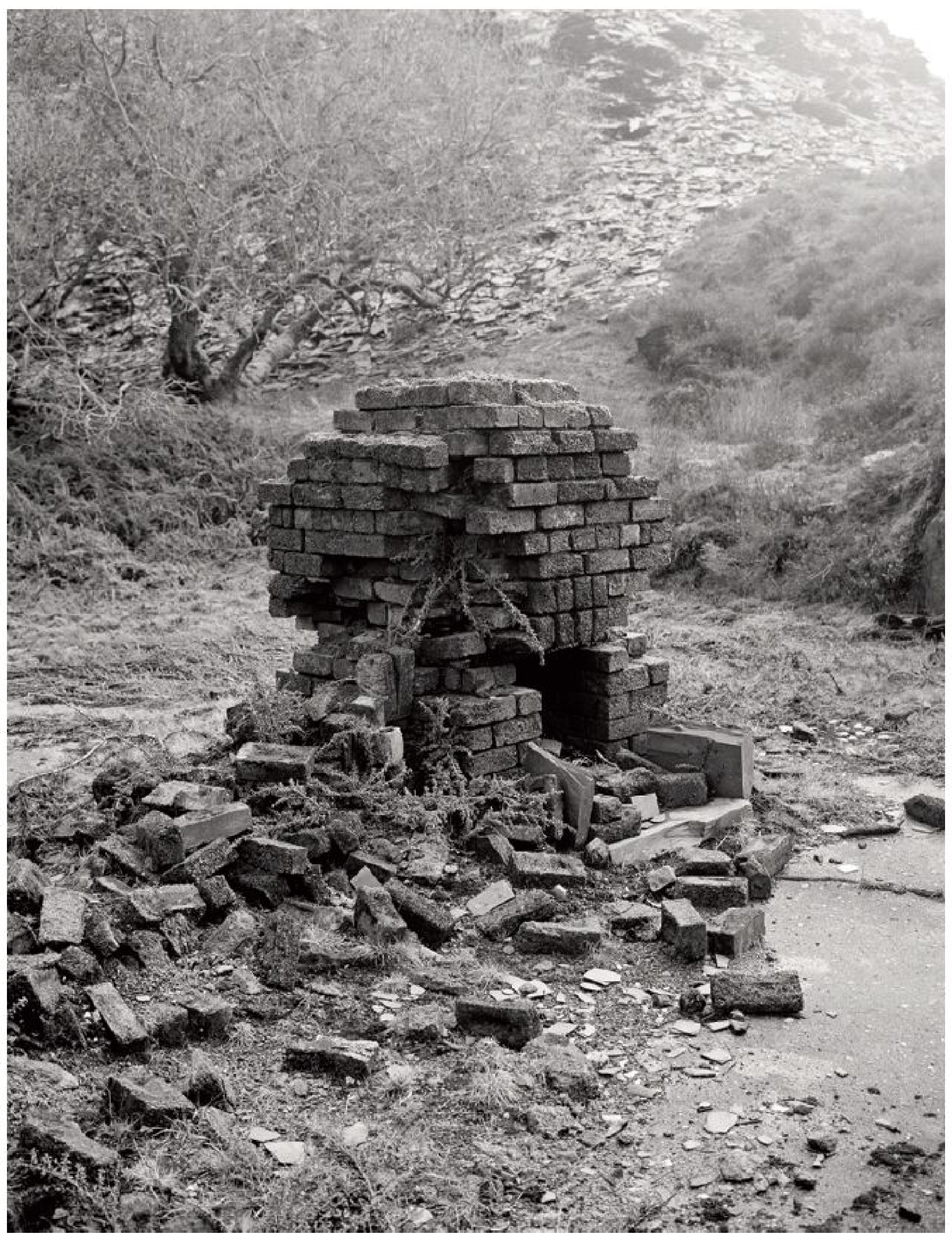
How to access the Augmented Reality

Six of the 3D models shown in this article have been enhanced with augmented reality. To access the AR, scan the QR (bottom left) on your phone or tablet. This will then activate a website on your device which will ask for permission to access the camera.

Once accepted, you will be taken to a landing page on your device, stating 'Look for an image to start the experience'. Point your device at one of these images and this will load the AR model of that building or object. As long as the trigger image is in view, the model will show on the device.

To see which feature images are accessible as AR models click 'view images' on the landing screen. If there are issues (e.g. image freeze), refreshing the webpage will often resolve this. The AR will work on most devices. ■

https://sketchfab.com/Southampton_Cultural_Services (for the 3D model collection).



MY HERITAGE PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

MENTORING OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Heritage Fund
80 Council for British Archaeology
Photoworks

Dr Jo Kirton, CBA delivery and engagement manager, and George Ellison, CBA Youth Advisory Board member, discuss a new Reconnecting Archaeology project that will explore contemporary heritage through the lens of young photographers

***This page:** A selection of works by the young photpgraphers taking part in the My Heritage Project*

In July 2024, the CBA youth engagement team launched their latest project: 'My Heritage' in partnership with Photoworks, a registered charity that champions photography across the UK and internationally, and with whom we have been collaborating since 2021.

My Heritage is part of the CBA's Reconnecting Archaeology project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is an innovative project, which will explore and reimagine young people's perceptions of archaeology and heritage in their own places, part of the CBA's wider endeavour to engage new audiences with the sector.

Eight young people, aged 16 to 25-years-old, have been commissioned to work with the CBA and Photoworks to develop a new body of artwork exploring contemporary archaeology and heritage. As individuals who are new to archaeology, they will consider how their current practice and interests might relate to archaeology and heritage through places, objects, or spaces that are important to them, exploring topics such as identity, community, and representation. Asking, how might these be interpreted and curated? What makes them relevant and 'worthy' of consideration, and by who?

Photography offers a unique vantage point from which the eight young people can challenge perceptions of what constitutes archaeology and heritage, exploring how we can all see ourselves reflected in archaeology and heritage, and work to engender a sense of belonging, ownership, and relevance.

Our young photographers will participate in group workshops, 1-2-1 mentoring with Laura El-Tantawy, the project's artist facilitator, and will exhibit their work at the end of the project. Each participant has access to a bursary to support their learning and a materials budget to work from.

Our young photographers

In October 2024, with support from members of the CBA's Youth Advisory Board, we recruited eight young people to participate in the project.

Our young photographers have a variety of lived experiences and perspectives, huge enthusiasm for the project, and are eager to explore their practice through the theme of archaeology and heritage.

Below, each of them introduces themselves, their work, and what drew them to the My Heritage project. We have also included an example of the work they submitted as part of their application to the project.

Right: Louise Haslam Chance's (pictured below left) Roll 37

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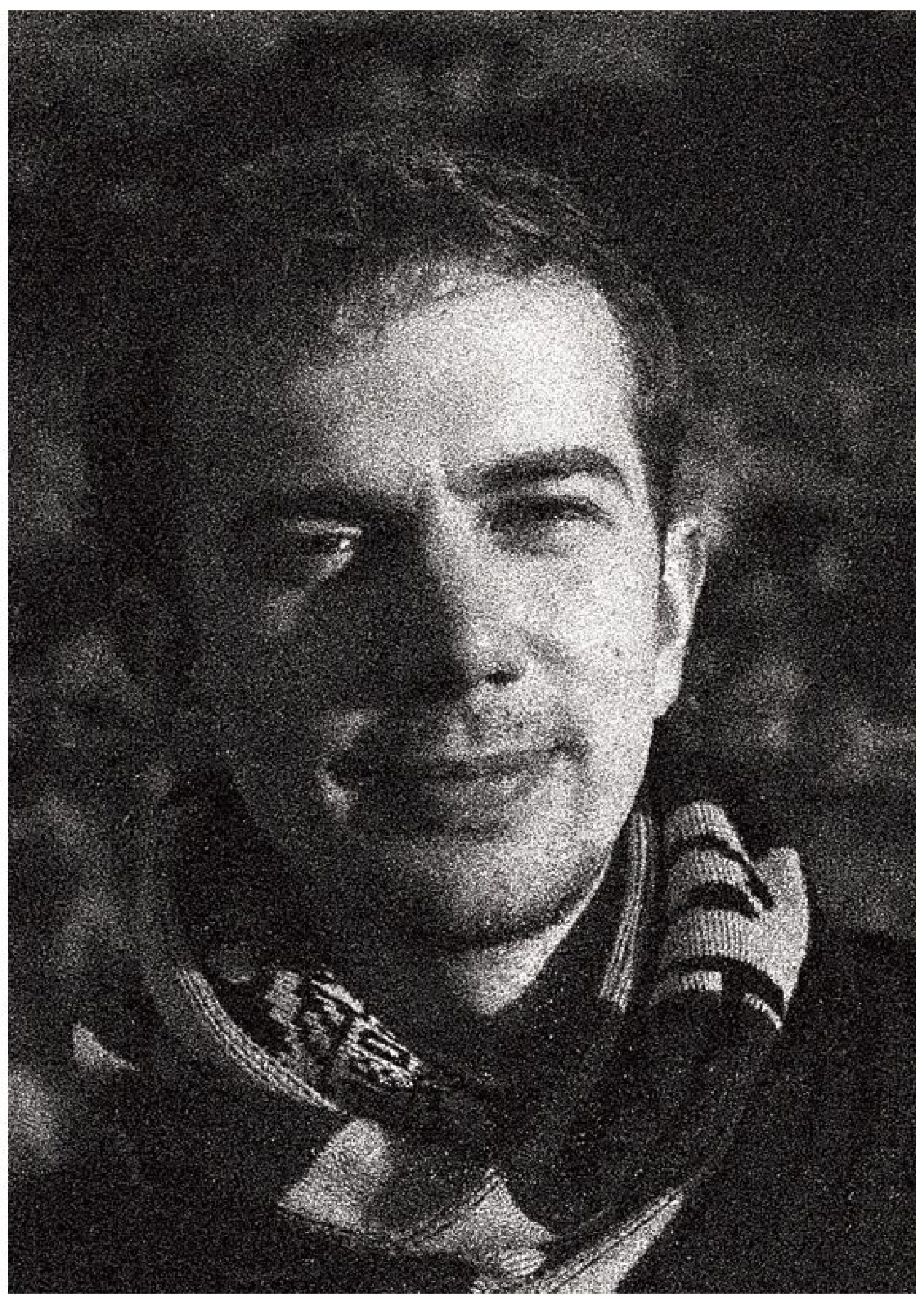
Louie Haslam Chance



Hello, my name is Louie and I'm a photographer based in Bradford. My photographic practice heavily revolves around capturing the deeper meanings of a space, and using alternative photographic processes to connect to, and create a sense of place. I usually work through analogue techniques as I find this way of working more meditative, thoughtful, and magical when seeing negatives and prints coming to life.

In my practice, I use developing and printing methods that are more economically and environmentally sustainable. I've found that making developers out of coffee, plants, and using soil from location, leads to a more embodied practice that helps me connect to the space photographed.

It's unpredictable, imperfect, and messy, which feels accurate to the landscapes and cityscapes I photograph, as well as my own identity.

As I've lived in Bradford my whole life, it's become a huge part of me, and often ends up being a focal point for my creative projects. I photograph the abandoned liminal spaces and forgotten objects that reflect the in-between state the city is currently in.

A lot can be gleaned from these spaces, with each object/building holding a wealth of historical and political context.

Below: An example of Adam Lin's (pictured right) work exploring masculinity and male intimacy

Adam (Han-Chun) Lin

I am a Taiwanese image-maker and artist based in London. My practice explores the complex, often underrepresented experiences of masculinity and male intimacy within domestic spaces, emphasising the intricate interplay of family dynamics, identity, and personal history.

Working fluidly between fiction, fashion, and documentary, I use image-making to amplify and humanise deeply personal stories. My work reflects the rigid expectations of masculinity and the lived, intimate experiences that break from these norms.

Above: Self publication by Chagla Mehmet (pictured right)

I hold an MFA in Fashion Image from Central Saint Martins. My work has been featured in publications such as *It's Nice That*, and shown in exhibitions such as Paris Ass Book Fair at the Palais de Tokyo, and 'Breaking Through' curated by Stonewall UK. I have worked with clients including *AnOther Magazine*, *Conde Nast GQ*, *Vogue Korea*, and *Vogue Taiwan*.

Taking part in this mentorship will allow me to expand my understanding of how contemporary archaeology and heritage intersect with visual culture, personal stories, identities, and spaces.

I look forward to learning from various practitioners, scholars and professionals. I am especially keen to develop my skills in contexualising, interpreting and conducting research in archaeology.

I hope that by integrating these approaches and knowledge into my photographic practice, I will enhance my creative growth, foster critical thinking, and invite new possibilities.

Below: Elizabeth Wells' (pictured left) work reflects her twin passions for archaeology and photography

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Chagla Mehmet

I am a Turkish Cypriot photographer based between Cyprus and the UK. My practice explores the intersections of land, memory, and identity, using analogue photography to reveal overlooked and forgotten narratives embedded within natural landscapes.

Much like archaeology uncovers fragments of the past, my work aims to make visible the layers of human history that shape our understanding of place and belonging.

The land itself serves as a silent witness, preserving the imprints of both personal and collective trauma.
In my project *Traces*, I explore how Cyprus's plant life and landscapes act as living archives, holding stories of resilience and loss.

My current work, *Moving Mountains*, addresses the environmental and cultural impact of mining in Northern Cyprus, documenting how industrial activities reshape both the physical terrain and the historical narratives connected to place.

I'm drawn to My Heritage because its mission of reimagining heritage aligns with my commitment to amplifying overlooked histories.

This opportunity will deepen my practice by helping me challenge conventional notions of preservation and inclusion, bringing new perspectives to my work that highlight untold or marginalized narratives within the natural world.

Elizabeth Wells

I'm studying for my A-Levels at a Waldorf Steiner School. I am taking A-Levels in Photography, History and Fine Art. My passion for history began when I was small – I loved to sit for hours reading books about Ancient Greek and Norse mythology, usually with one of my cats curled up somewhere nearby.

For many years, I wanted to become an archaeologist, but as I have got older, my passion for photography has become equally important to me. I recognise that art played a huge role in preserving history throughout the ages. I'm eager to continue exploring the past, yet I hope to contribute towards a future where, as history is uncovered, it can be expressed through art and enjoyed by many people for years to come.

I'm also an active member of Brighton's queer community, and this has shaped my interests, my values, and my artistic work. I'm thrilled to have the

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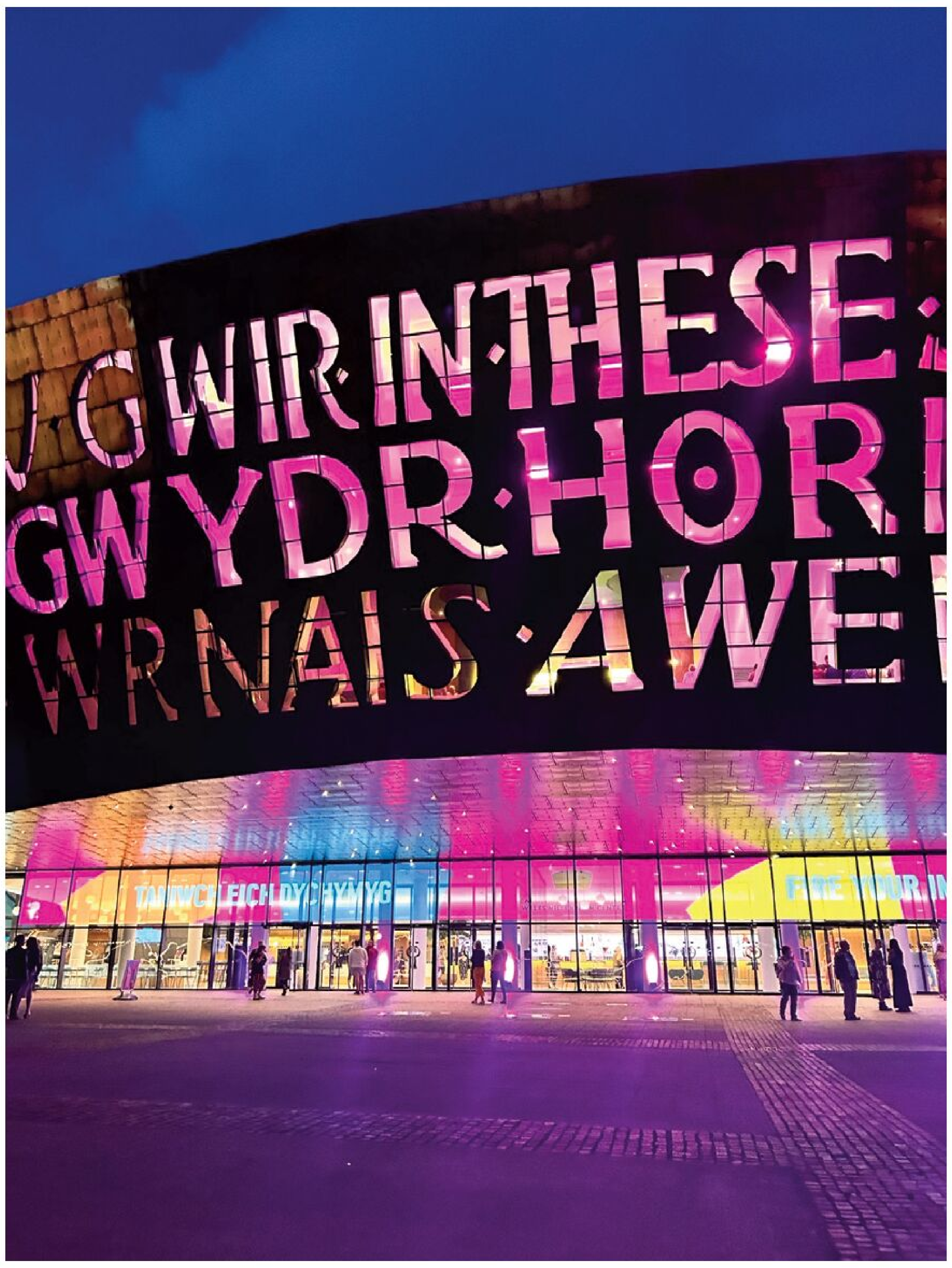


Above: Sophie Mann (left) captures moments that allow people to see things from her perspective

opportunity to take part in the My Heritage mentorship project, to learn from experts, and to continue exploring how I can bring history to life through my photographs. This mentorship gives me the perfect opportunity to immerse myself in the field, gaining inspirational hands-on experience.

Sophie Mann

My name is Sophie, I am 17-years-old and currently in full-time education. I have a passion for photography as I am able to capture moments and allow people to see things from my perspective. I love looking back on my photos to remember how I felt and be able to tell stories about that moment in time.

Photography is something that is really accessible as, even though I am in a wheelchair, it gives me a reason to get out and about and enjoy exploring. I enjoy taking photos of landmarks, particularly Buckingham Palace as I love learning about the royals.

Solomon Pui Chung Yu

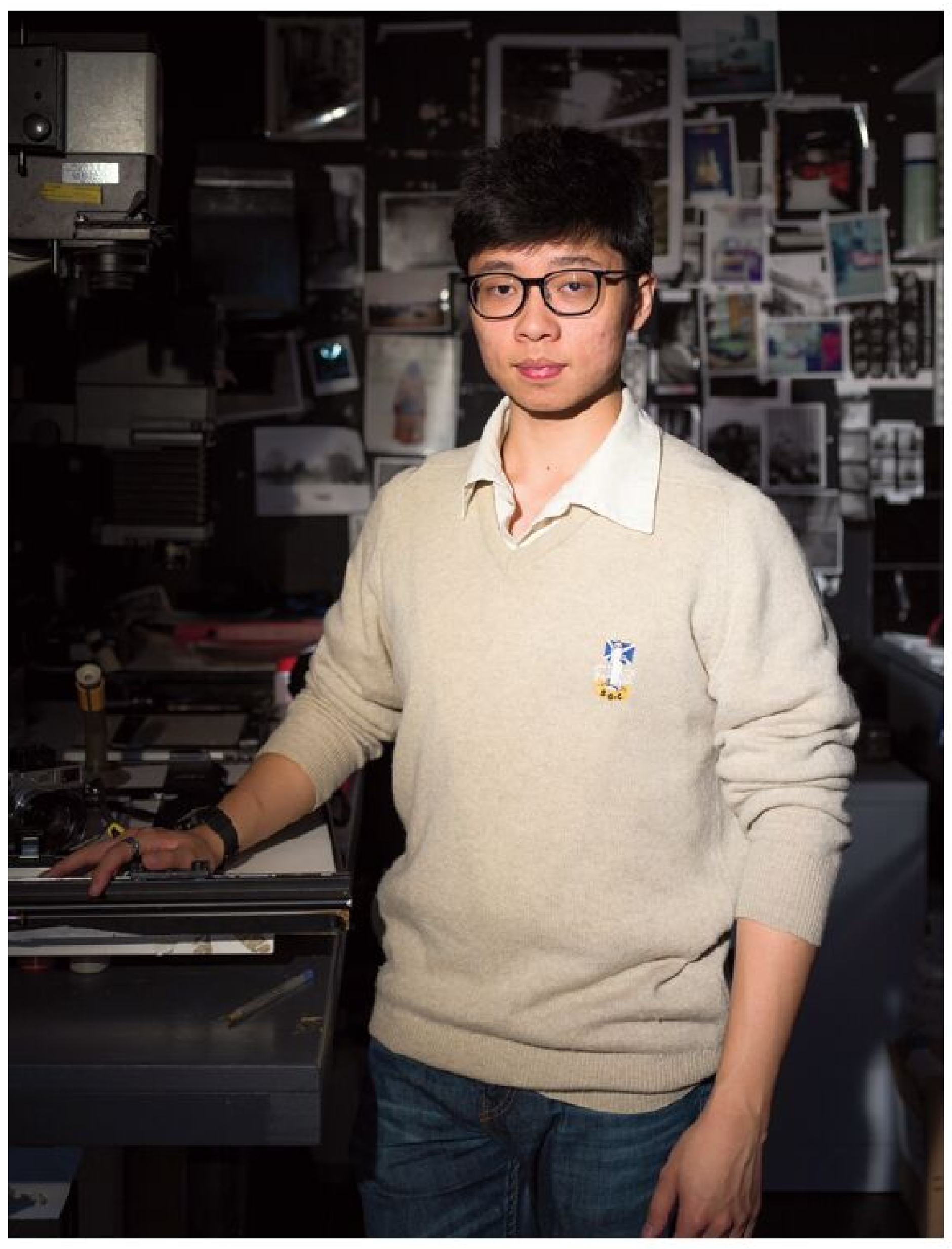
I am a London-based photographer exploring themes of belonging, identity, and the interplay between modern technology and everyday life.

I love to capture intriguing details in daily routines, experimenting with bright colours and compositions. Analogue and vintage digital are the two main mediums that I work with.

Growing up in the shift from physical to digital media, I am always captivated by the chemistry behind a physical photograph. I wish to learn and preserve the tactile beauty of analogue photography processes for future generations.

Vintage digital also holds personal significance because it was my first introduction to photography. I strive to convey the sense of memory and evoke nostalgia that we can all resonate deeply within this medium.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of the My Heritage project. It is very inspiring to learn about the stories behind the work of each artist. I am excited to further explore topics such as identity and heritage, with our mentor and fellow photographers, and further develop my body of work.



Above: Solomon Pui Chung Yu's (pictured above right) photographs capture intriguing details in daily routines

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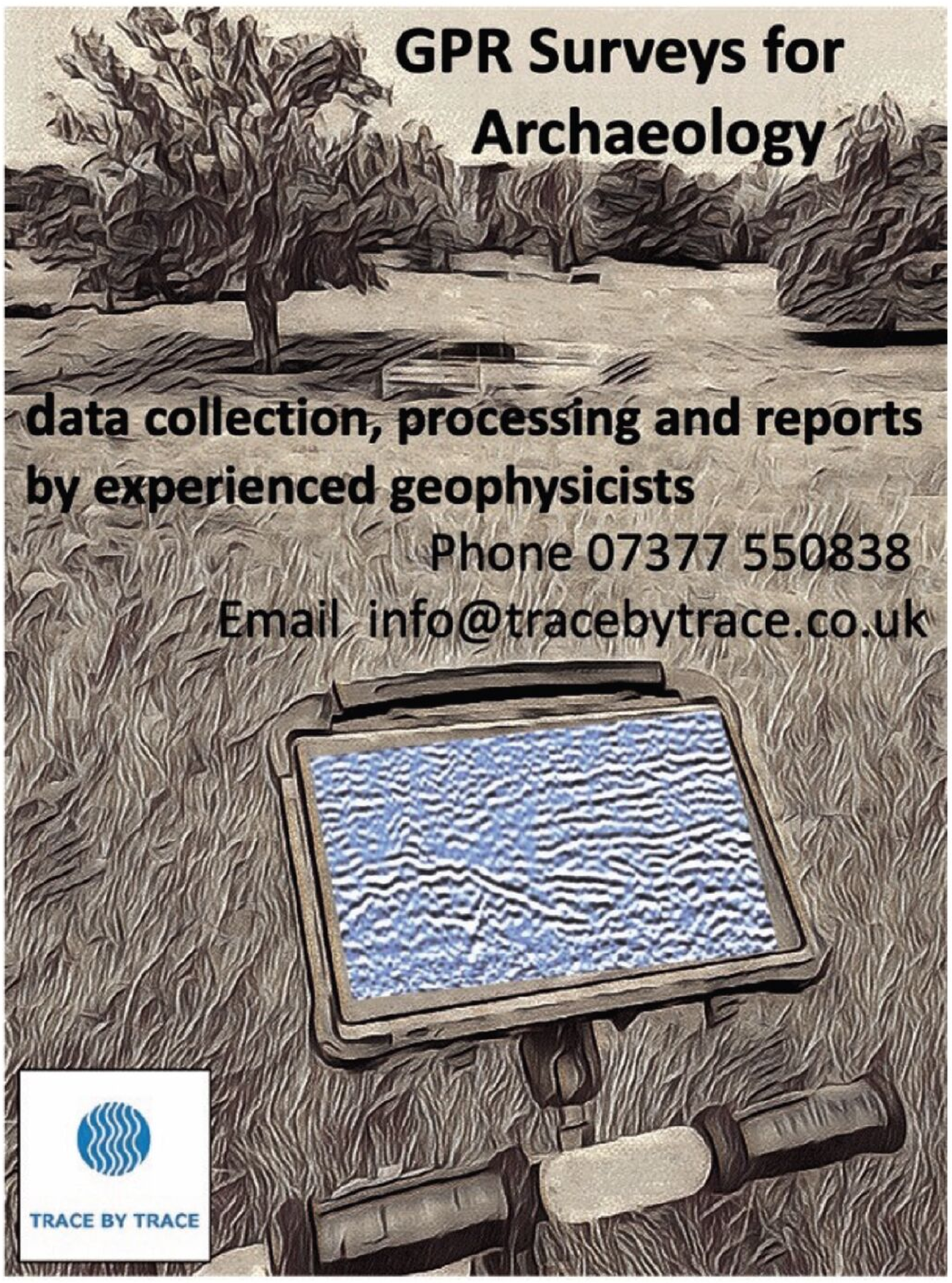

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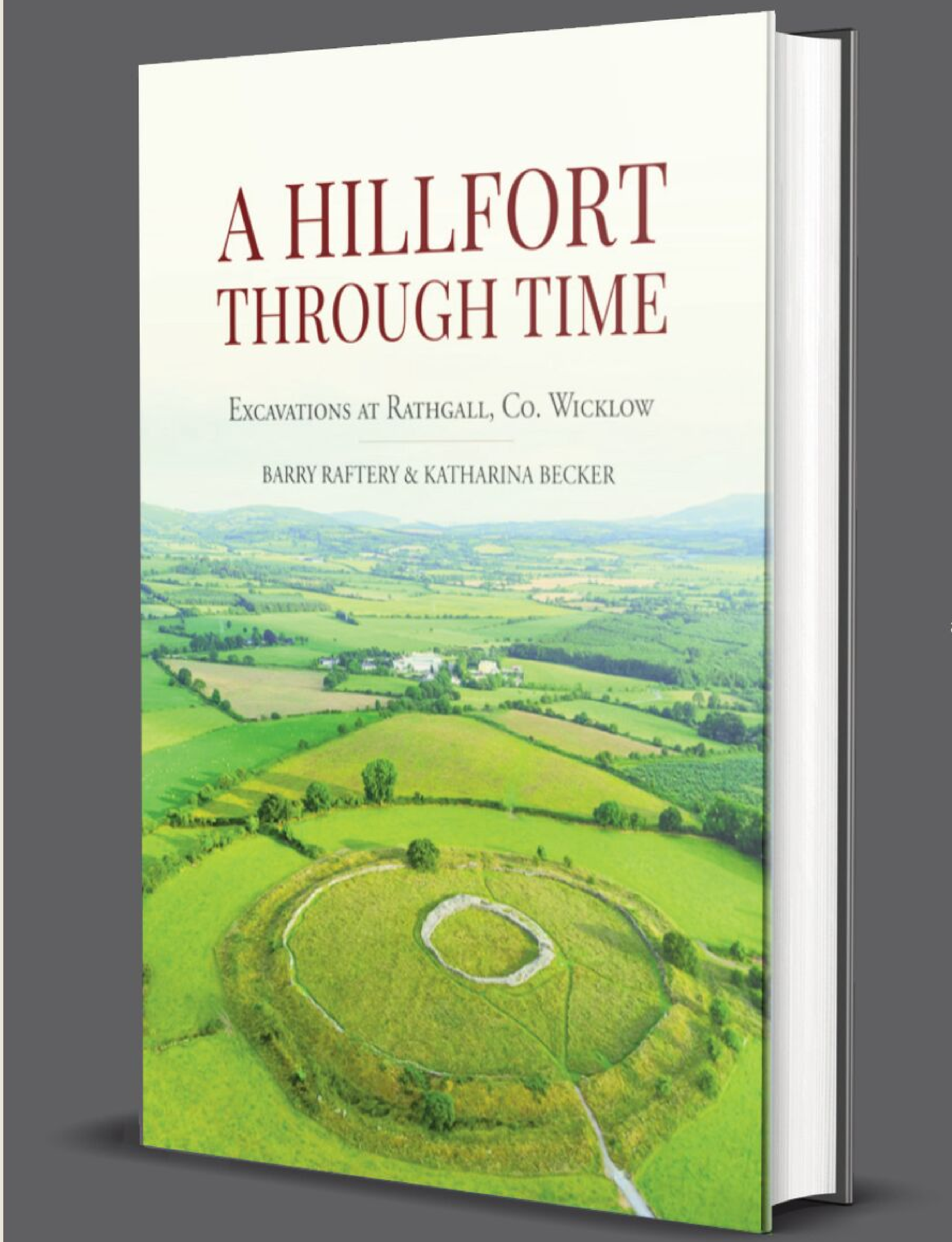
A HILLFORT THROUGH TIME
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RATHGALL HILLFORT is perhaps one of the most important, iconic and well-known monuments in Irish archaeology. This publication presents the excavations at Rathgall, Co. Wicklow, conducted by Barry Raftery, formerly Professor of Celtic Archaeology at University College Dublin. Although Raftery published aspects of the site primarily in the 1970s, he passed away before he could finalise a comprehensive account. This volume presents his work alongside new data from post-excavation analysis conducted between 2010 and 2013. Raftery's original voice is preserved, with editorial comments adding clarification where necessary. His draft text is juxtaposed with discussions of alternative scenarios that emerged from recent analyses, including finalised site drawings and photographs.

'The present volume assuredly joins Barry's other great contributions to Ireland's archaeology, from his studies of La Téne material culture in the 1980s by way of his leadership of wetland investigations to Pagan Celtic Ireland—in sum, a remarkable legacy of which his family can be justifiably proud. Dr Katharina Becker and the contributors who have brought these important studies on the hillfort at Rathgall to fruition are to be applauded.'

IAN RALSTON, ABERCROMBY PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

January 2025 | €75 | 978-1-913934-77-4 | Hardback | 588pp

Wordwell | www.wordwellbooks.com

Ben Waters

I am a photographic artist currently based in Wales. I most recently graduated with a BA Hons Photography at Arts University Bournemouth.

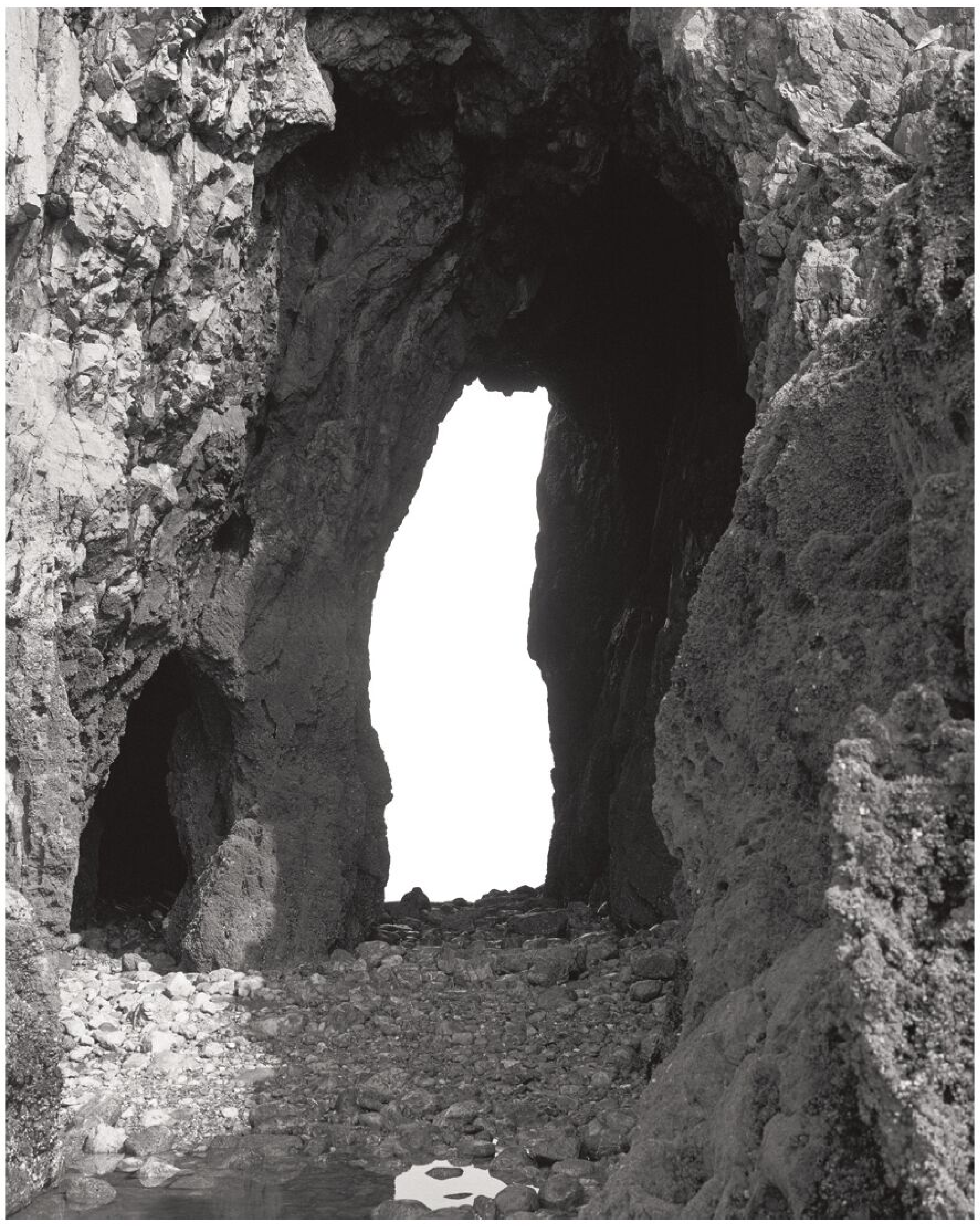
Stemming from an initial interest in ancient belief, folklore, and prehistory, over the last few years my practice has explored the ways in which we bestow significance and construct meaning from the environment, through considering photography's role as a record, and by questioning our engagement with the life that has preceded us.

What interests me about the My Heritage project is the important questions it raises around ideas of heritage and our relation to the spaces we inhabit in a contemporary world. In an age where we are increasingly disconnected from the world from which we came and live our lives seemingly concerned only with the present.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE COPYRIGHT TO THE THE INDIVIDUA ARTISTS NAMED

Above: Abigail Tinnion (pictured right) investigates folklore, mythology, and historical belief systems

Below: Ben Waters (pictured left) explores the ways in which we bestow significance and construct meaning from the environment



I think it is important to question and reflect upon our histories and collective memory, both of our past and also what we are choosing to preserve or forget in the present. As meaning is unfixed, fragile and always shifting, recognising the relevance of our individual perspective, I feel that active engagement to the world around us is more relevant now than ever.

Abigail Tinnion

I'm Abigail Tinnion, a visual artist and folklorist working primarily in photography. My practice investigates folklore, mythology, and historical belief systems, especially regarding autonomy and oppression.

Through my work, I explore identity and representation, particularly examining what defines the 'inhuman' and our relationships with 'the other', ancient cultures, animals, and the dead.

My recent project focuses on migratory transformation legends, stories which historically have served to 'other' individuals, affecting their societal treatment. By envisioning surreal, abject bodily transformations, restraints, and contortions, I explore the impact of these beliefs.

My images capture performances and costumes interacting with spaces of archaeological significance across Britain and Ireland. The imagery draws on a combination of historical beliefs and tangible evidence from the material record. I believe folklore can enrich archaeology, shedding light on how people historically interpreted remnants of the past within their cultural frameworks.

Next steps

Over the next six months, the CBA and Photoworks will be working with the young photographers as we explore the themes outlined above. We hope, by the end of the project, that all the participants will have had a meaningful and fulfilling experience that will support them in their future careers (in photography or elsewhere) and they will have created and exhibited a new portfolio of work.

We also hope that we (the CBA) will have a greater understanding of how to engage new and aspirational audiences. We will use the learning to shape future collaborative, cross-sector projects to support this work. 🟩

If you would like to keep up to date with the project please visit: https://www.archaeologyuk.org/youth-engagement/my-heritage-project.html

my archaeology

The senior project officer, Cambridge Archaeological Unit, returns to My Archaeology to continue his story following the recent publication of the Must Farm excavations

Mark Knight

In 2016, *My Archaeology* featured Mark Knight as he came to the end of the excavations he was directing at one of the UK's best preserved prehistoric sites, Must Farm, for the Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

Excavation is only the start of the journey of archaeological discovery and so, following the recent groundbreaking publication of the site, we revisit the experiences and insights which lead Mark to Must Farm, and continue his story of understanding what it reveals about both the past and future of the Fens.

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Right: Mark Knight, end of day, north-western edge of the Flag Fen Basin, Peterborough

Archaeology found me, rather than me finding it. When I left school, I worked odd jobs, including car cleaning, plumbing, and radiator engineering, but then I found myself unemployed in the mid-1980s.

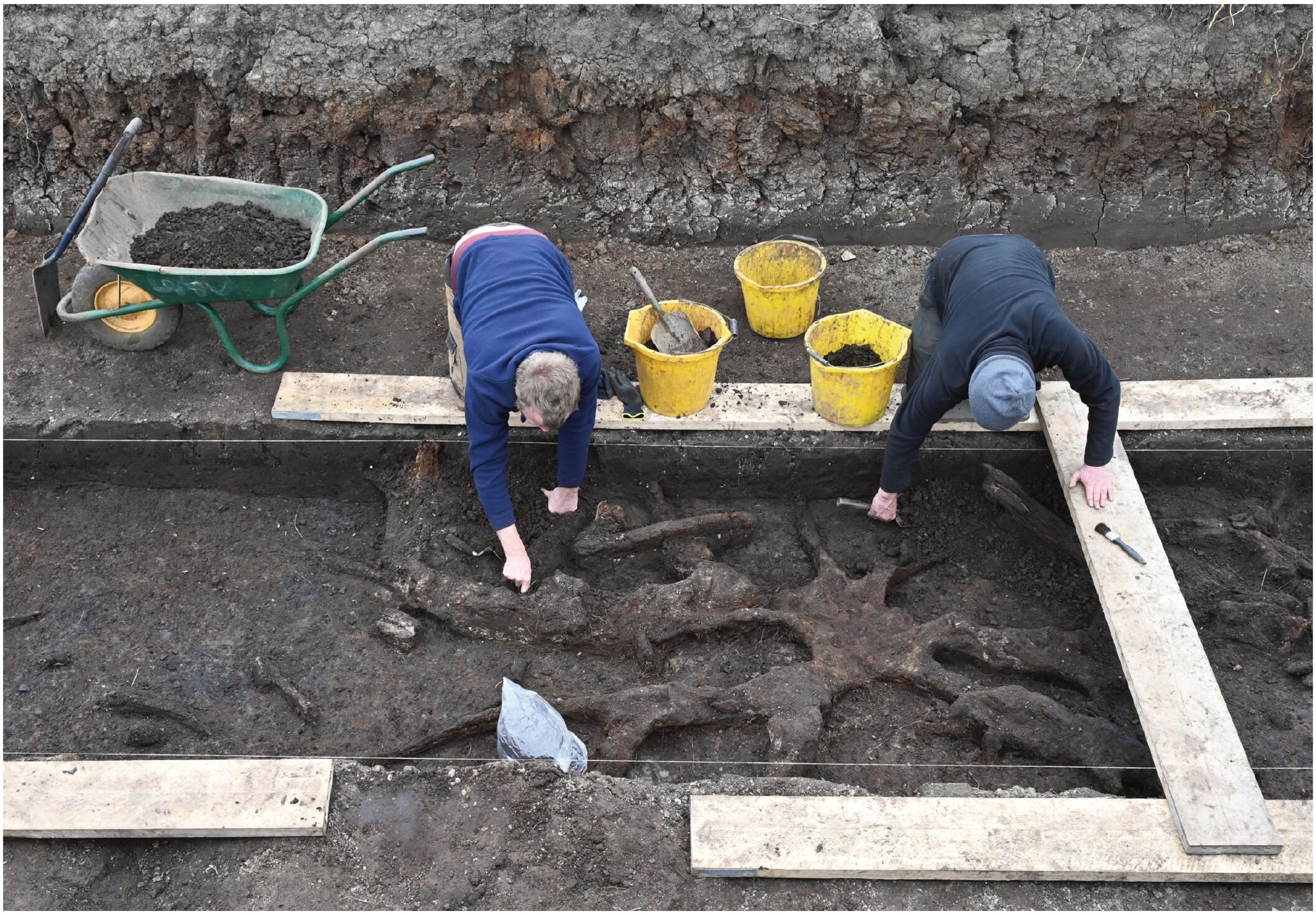
It was through the Manpower Services Commission that I was offered an opportunity to go and work for the City Council in Exeter.

There was a choice of working with the Parks Department or with Exeter Museum's Archaeological Field Unit working two and a half days a week on an archaeological site.

I remember turning to a mate and saying, "I think I might go for the archaeology one because I'm sure they'll be nice people to work with." I'd been out of work for a while and had little to lose.

My first site was located on a waterfront in Exeter and for the first two months I didn't really know what I was doing and I didn't particularly like it. It all felt very unfamiliar and I felt like I was pretending. Even the words archaeology and archaeologist weren't in my vocabulary, and I found them strange to say to my friends when they asked what I was up to.

Then something clicked. Prophetically, I was digging a deep hole with water pouring inside and there was some waterlogged wood – a wattle revetment. I think it was at that moment that I decided archaeology was what I wanted to do. I'd gotten to know John Dunkley, an old school 'hippie' archaeologist who worked for Exeter Museum. He had a spark about him which helped ignite something in me. He was an exponent of the craft of archaeology, the idea that you could dig a hole and it could look beautiful, and that it could speak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Above: Exposing a Bronze Age tree stump (Oak) and the old land surface at Flag Fen, Peterborough (2021)

to you on a visceral level. Rather than being able to say that I was an archaeologist, I started to actually believe I was one.

I had worked at Exeter Archaeology for about six years when the director of the field unit there, Chris Henderson, said that I should do a degree if I wanted to go further in this career. I decided to go to Cardiff University where I was taught by people like Alasdair Whittle and John Evans, who frankly turned my head.

Up until that point, all of the archaeology I had done was Roman and medieval and they opened up my eyes, and my horizons, to prehistory. I delved into this archaeology that didn't have a map or text to go with it. It was genuine deduction.

This might seem cliched but I realised that there was more to archaeology than just digging holes. There's a real skill to transferring the site you've excavated onto the page and presenting it in a way that paints the picture of what's in your head. I might have secured my degree 30 years ago but I feel I'm still learning all the time.

> **"My archaeology can be summed up in three words: Context is everything"**

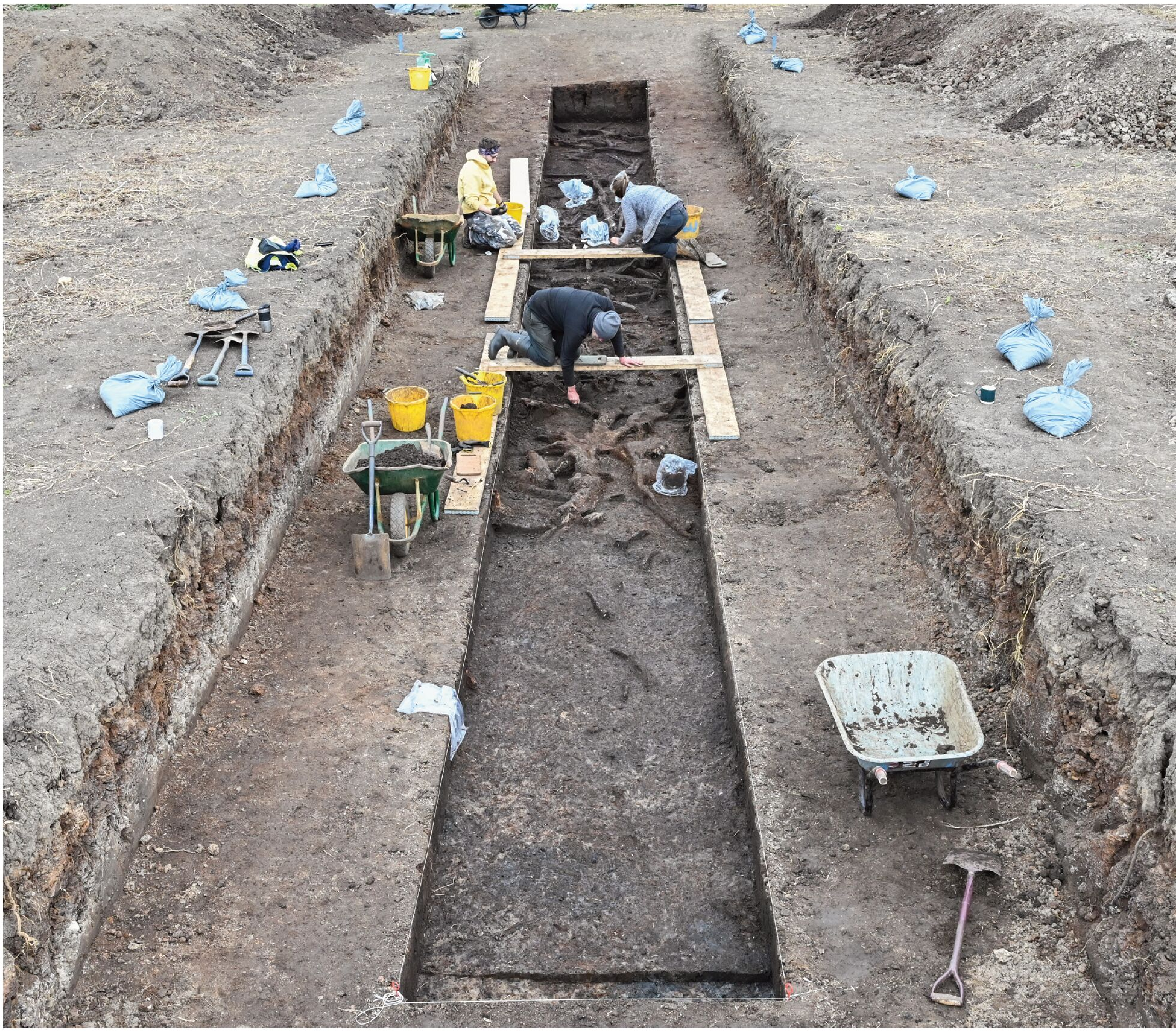
When I finished my degree, the plan was to return to Exeter Archaeology via volunteering at Boxgrove. I then got a call from a good friend who was working for Cambridge Archaeological Unit who had a place on his floor and persuaded me to join him. I never went anywhere else and 28 years later I'm still here now.

When I worked in the southwest, a lot of the sites we dug involved evaluating the potential for archaeology, but when something was found, something good, more often than not, the site didn't go to full excavation. When I came to Cambridgeshire, we'd actually get the chance to see through the mitigation process and dig the whole site. Not only that, we got to dig the site beside it and the next site and we could build up a picture of the wider landscape.

My work with the Cambridge Archaeological Unit lifted me out of the limited lens of 'the site' and into the perspective offered by comprehending 'landscapes'.

Here, my training ground was in the river valleys at the edge of fenland where I learned to determine the

Right: ***Trench 2, Flag Fen Condition Assessment. Exposing a Bronze Age tree stump (Oak) and the old land surface at Flag Fen, Peterborough (2021)***



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

depths of peat and the densities of settlement and agriculture you could encounter in the semi-Fens. This left me wondering about what would be found in the waterscape beyond, wading deeper into the Fen basin itself. Then I started to work in the brick pits of Whittlesey at Must Farm.

David Attenborough's interest in deep time came about from messing about in quarry pits in Leicestershire, and little did I know what these big apertures in the ground could offer, whether you're interested in the Jurassic or the Holocene.

It felt a bit like serendipity. The quarry company was digging a really deep hole into the peat, metres below anything we'd reached previously.

We popped down to have a look at it, thinking there would be nothing there because it'd be too deep and too wet. We were amazed to find a buried soil surface at that depth and, in that, there were early Neolithic flints and part of a ditch, a prehistoric boundary.

> **"The water table is dropping in the Fens and farmers are now ploughing gravel where they used to plough peat"**

There was a thrilling realisation that this deeply buried, waterlogged landscape is also deeply stratified and very good at preserving past horizons. Rising groundwater at the beginning of the Neolithic created the conditions for peat growth and then major marine inundations at the end of the Neolithic laid down thick bands of silt. Freshwater saturation in the Bronze Age marked a return to peat deposits.

I am always at my happiest in these black, buttery contexts, while all along appreciating that inherent depth-time relationship.

As we continued work at Must Farm, we found that palimpsest is rare, the peats and silts keep apart successive occupations.

We found a paleochannel which retains four metres or 1,500 years of deposition, dating to 1600-100 BC. This is the result of steady accrual of river silt in a small, sluggish river channel, ensuring most of its associated activity is preserved in situ and, most importantly, articulated in succession: Early Bronze Age fish weirs and traps preserved below Middle Bronze Age causeways, preserved below Late Bronze Age pile-dwellings.

My archaeology can be summed up in three words: Context is everything. A large part of this viewpoint is borne out of the time I've since spent excavating Fenland. Here context is preserved in abundance.

When it came to excavating the Late Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlement at Must Farm in the summer of 2015, we were aware that this was an extraordinary opportunity. The settlement had caught fire and collapsed into a river channel nearly 3,000 years ago. This combination of charring and waterlogging meant that the preservation of organic remains was exceptional.

Equally, there was an understanding that the abandonment of this pile-dwelling was sudden and unplanned. In their hasty exodus, the occupants pretty much left everything behind.

Anyone who has ever visited the site would have smelt a sulphureous, rotten egg smell, the stench of organic decay, that tells you that you're at Must Farm. My partner and my daughter would always say that when I was back from site that they could smell it on me.

We were immersed in the site in every sense of the word and I think it is tremendous that we brought a lot of people with us, and that they became immersed in it too.

We built a gantry around the site to host visitors and Chris Wakefield's digital engagement helped allow the story of excavation to evolve as the dig progressed.

We weren't afraid to get it wrong. We might put out an interpretation on the Tuesday and then completely change it by the Thursday, but not feel worried and constrained by that. This made sure what we shared was genuinely live.

It took us as long to dig it as the settlement actually lasted. It was a year in the life of a settlement that we excavated, and as a consequence we talked about seasons and not about centuries. It's a snapshot relative to most archaeology we do, but it was still 12 months of occupation. There was enough time for them to construct their homes and furnish them, as well as make textiles, break pots, and butcher deer.

It starts to feel like it isn't archaeology anymore. It starts to feel like you're doing some kind of ethnography, at least in the sense that we were able to observe routine, everyday practice. People have often asked me if we were to dig Must Farm again, what would we change about our methodology?

"It's not just the archaeology that's time conditional, it's also the archaeologists. There's an onus on us to train the next generation, to help find the future 'Fenland' specialists."

At the time, it was uncharted ground but because we'd been in that landscape for a long time and, in particular, familiar with digging the sediments of the river channel, we had built the core of a team with the right skills to hand for excavating the settlement. There was a real sense that we were ready for Must Farm and that we were the best team to dig it.

When we first evaluated the site back in 2006 and found all the metalwork and pots, a comment from

Below: Fen-edge evaluation, Flag Fen Basin, Peterborough

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one of the visiting academics was that it couldn't be just a settlement because we had too much stuff.

That comment, 'too much stuff', ended up resonating. It was a massive undertaking to bring such a rich and complex site as the Must Farm pile-dwelling settlement to publication because there was so much material, and so many specialists involved.

Credit here goes to all concerned, especially the other authors and editors. My name may sit at the front of the project but I was definitely only one part of a publication team and was extremely fortunate to work with people better skilled in pulling everything together.

Focusing on 'My Archaeology' feels a little uncomfortable, especially when you know archaeology always involves many hands and minds.

Everyone used to think that Bronze Age metalwork was some sort of rarity and special, and yet the quantity of axes, sickles, gouges, and razors we've found in a domestic setting at Must Farm kind of turns that idea on its head.

We want to prove the Bronze Age settlement to be ordinary, rather than extraordinary, and the burden is on us now to demonstrate that by showing it's not the only one.

When I was at Cardiff University, the late John Evans taught me about the importance of time, space, and scale, when it came to archaeological thinking, but I believe scale often gets underplayed.

The depth of deposits at the Must Farm quarry gave us engrained chronology but it was the extent of clay extraction that offered the 'scale' needed to fully comprehend a landscape in context, as well as the frequency or regularity of use.

We came to the understanding that the archaeology of the Fen basin is extensive rather than intensive. You couldn't just put a line around individual sites because the spaces in between are just as meaningful.

The real joy of the archaeology we've done within those environments is that it feels comprehensive. The 10 fish weirs, 24 fish traps, and nine logboats we found in 320 metres of a buried river channel are probably how many there actually were. Here, the magnitude of past activity is also being preserved.

While I was left feeling optimistic about the levels of preservation we found at Must Farm, there is a sense that equivalent sites in the fens are now under threat. The water table is dropping in the Fens and farmers are now ploughing gravel where they used to plough peat.

Recently, I've been working at the National Trust's Wicken Fen, one of the last remnants of undrained fen. We've been monitoring the groundworks for the installation of a waterproof liner to help retain water.

Without measures like this, the buried landscape is coming to the surface and I wonder how long we've got before some of Fenland's best-preserved archaeology dries out and disappears.

When we dug Must Farm, our first reference was always Flag Fen and it feels like the right time for that site to be brought back into the story. There's so much more to discover in light of what we've learned from Must Farm, but it's a site that is drying out

***Below:* Watching brief of peatland restoration at Spinney Bank, Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire**

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CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Above: Fen-edge evaluation, Flag Fen Basin, Peterborough (Whittlesey Brick Pit chimneys in the background)

and needs further investigation before it's too late. It's not just the archaeology that's time conditional, it's also the archaeologists. There's an onus on us to train the next generation, to help find the future 'Fenland' specialists.

There were a lot of us who got started in archaeology through the Manpower Services Scheme, and we're starting to come towards the end of our careers now. I look back and I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity I did, and I worry that we've lost some of those entry routes for people like me.

Over the years that we've worked at the quarry, we've greatly benefited from the insights and support of the team working in the brick pits. They would never call themselves archaeologists but I've noticed how, in turn, the ways that they think and talk about the deposits has shifted closer to ours.

I was chatting to a machine driver while we exposed a section through deeply stratified freshwater peat and marine silt, and he said: "It's just like what's going to happen to us in the future, then Mark? Your past is our future, isn't it?" I thought that this was an interesting way of seeing it.

The Fenland is an archive of environmental change, and it's time to start thinking about how this can help to inform its future as much as it can its past.

The story of the site is now available to read in two Open Access publications: *Must Farm pile-dwelling settlement Volumes 1 & 2* which are available to download for free online - https://www.mustfarm.com/bronze-age-settlement/publications/. 🟩

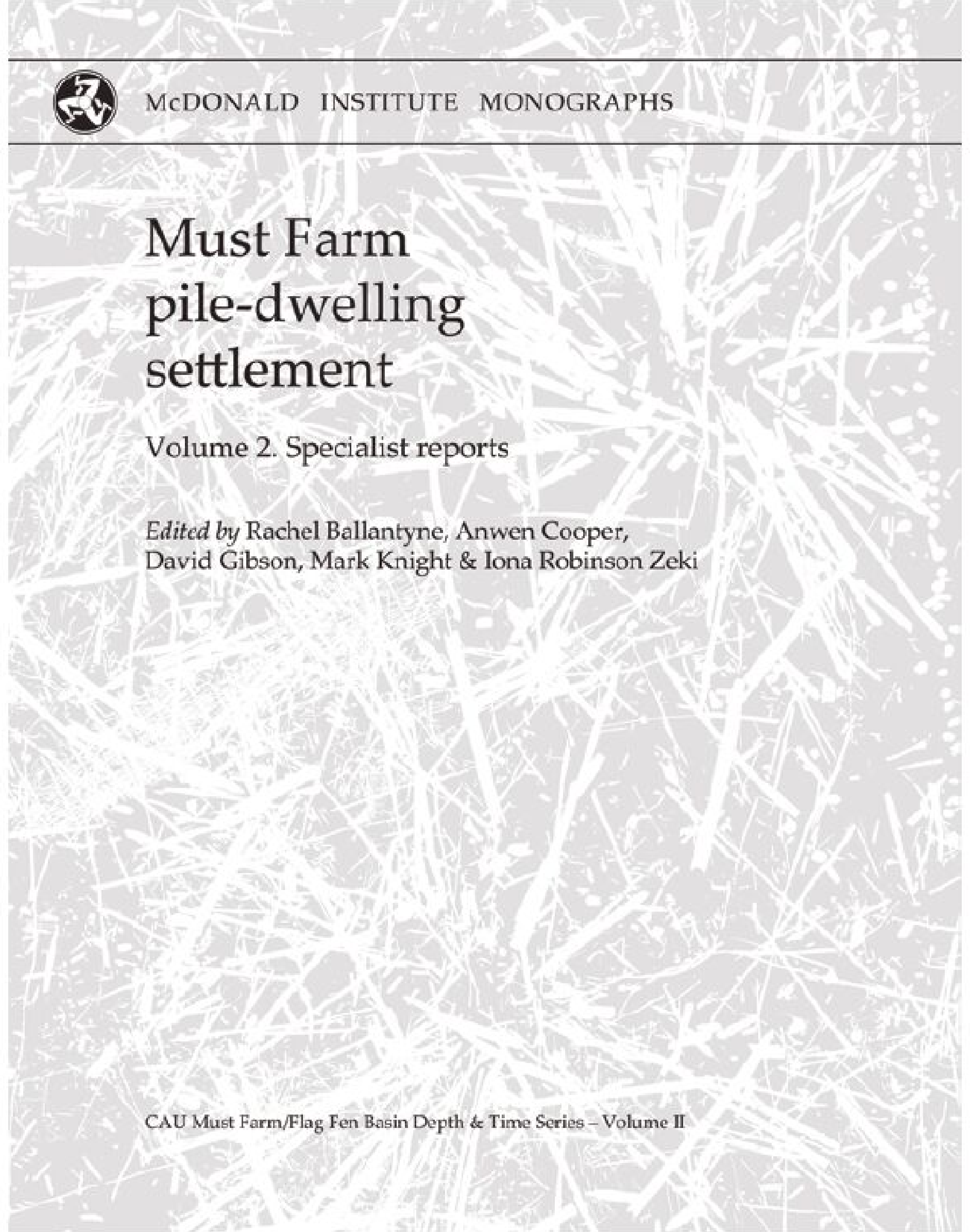
McDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

Must Farm
pile-dwelling
settlement

Volume 1. Landscape, architecture and occupation

Edited by Mark Knight, Rachel Ballantyne, Matthew Brudenell, Anwen Cooper, David Gibson & Iona Robinson Zeki

CAU Must Farm/Flag Fen Basin Depth & Time Series – Volume II



McDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

Must Farm
pile-dwelling
settlement

Volume 2. Specialist reports

Edited by Rachel Ballantyne, Anwen Cooper, David Gibson, Mark Knight & Iona Robinson Zeki

CAU Must Farm/Flag Fen Basin Depth & Time Series – Volume II

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More discoveries please

Thanks for your recent magazine. In it you invited comments, so I decided to do exactly that. The change of regime at CBA - or at least the editorial board - has clearly brought a change of content to the magazine. I started my subscription because I enjoyed reading all the latest news from digs going on around the country. I was interested in what had been discovered and the history behind it all. Also the possible interpretations.

I read all the articles and the news bulletins with great interest. Now, however, this has all changed to be a magazine focused on the people at CBA, community involvement, children's activities, awards, etc.

The archaeology stories seem to have disappeared and most of the actual ‘discoveries" news has come from *Antiquity*. In fact, I read very little of the magazine because there was little in it of interest to me. I wouldn't object to an occasional article on these topics but not the bulk of the magazine on a continual basis.

Hilary Rock-Gormley

Keeping the door open to the amateur enthusiasts

Thank you for issue 199 of *British Archaeology* and celebrating 80 years of age. I was only 17 and still at school when it was realised that in post-war years there would be a desperate need to do some investigating of the land before rebuilding.

My first dig was in 1957, and I have kept touch with archaeology since then. I went into the deep end of CBA in 1966 when I became secretary of CBA 14. Let me describe a bit of the 80-year history. The country was divided into Groups. I believe London was Group 1. The East Midlands was Group 6 – Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.

Sometime before I became a secretary, the three ‘B's as I call them – Maurice Barley, a WEA tutor later the first Professor of Archaeology at Nottingham University, Tom Baker, curator and more of Lincoln Museum, and Dr Lewis Barker, a medic, voiced their dissatisfaction with Group 6 management and hived off Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and named it Group 14.

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After ‘Animal, Vegetable and Mineral' and other means that popularised archaeology there was a rush to get out and dig. We had four meetings a year. One was a day conference on a themed topic at some location around the counties. One particular one I recall was not for the topic but for the location. It was held at Retford Teacher Training College. We had a five course lunch and the lecture room was furnished with arm chairs.

Moving on, archaeology was changing its shape and becoming more scientific with the result that the local groups needed help from the specialists, as well as investing in new costly equipment. Most of the would-be archaeologists had to resort to helping the local unit or enrolling in one of the national digs advertised by CBA.

This brings me into the 199 issue with its excellent stories of successes. It seems the universities play a big role here and professionals are essential. Thank goodness there is room for the amateur. I trust the CBA will continue to campaign to keep the door open for the amateur. I suspect, however, that the future is very much in the realm of the specialists with a need to protect the would be's.

Pearl Wheatley

Response from Neil Redfern, executive director of the CBA

I wanted to thank everyone who has contacted us about our last edition, no.199. These two letters are a sample of what we received. May I reassure all of our readers that ensuring we have high quality features in the magazine will always be our priority. The magazine is part of our membership offer and part of our campaigning voice for archaeology in the UK.

As a charity we support grassroots archaeology, young people and those new to archaeology explore the subject first hand through the work and activities we deliver – helping our members and readers of the magazine, who support this work, know what we are doing is also a key priority.

We will work hard to ensure we find the right balance between these priorities. Understanding the views of our readers and membership is very important to the CBA.

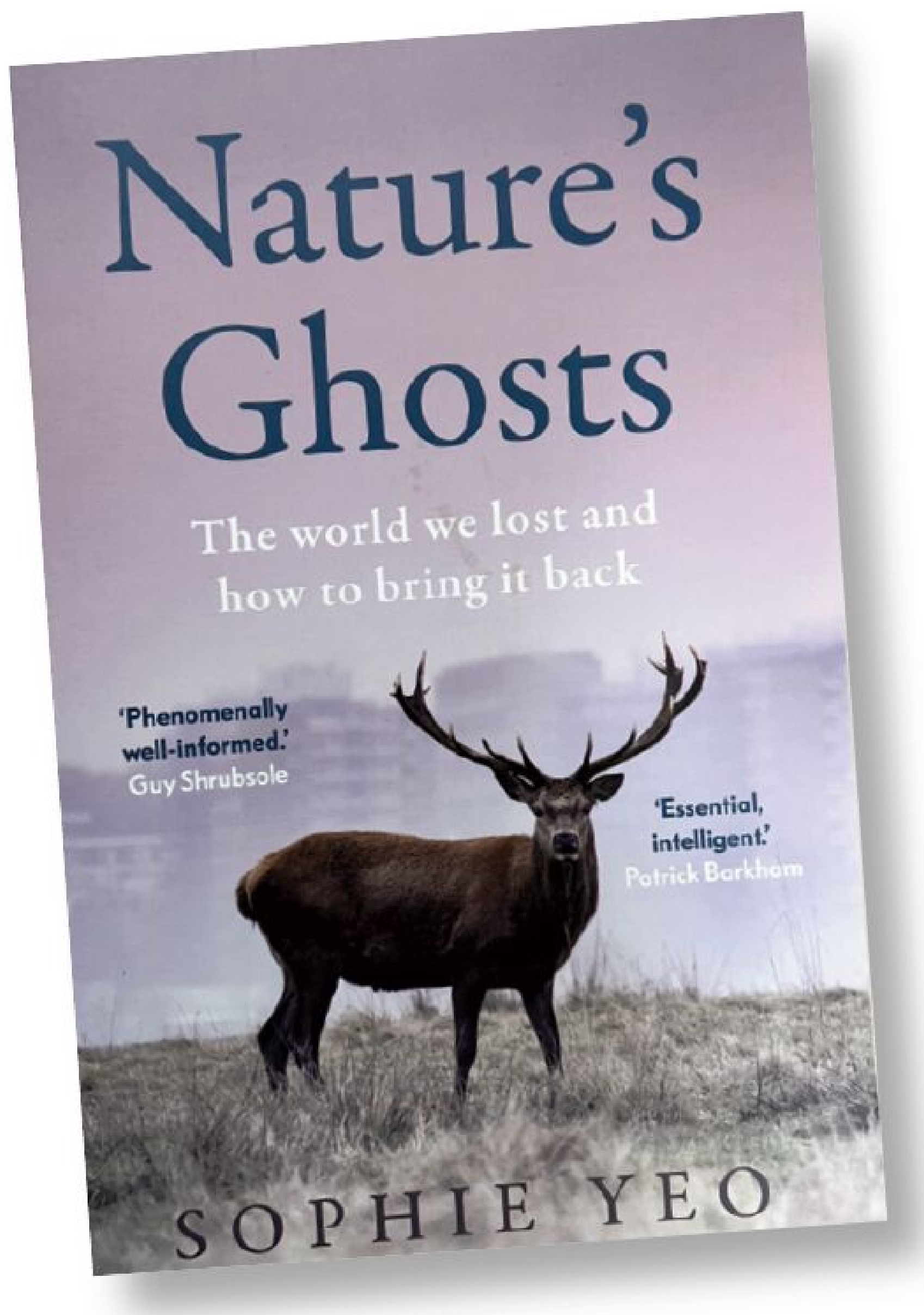
The last readers' survey of *British Archaeology* was in 2006. We will be looking to run a new readers' survey in 2025 and combining it with a wider set of questions about the CBA, our membership, our charitable objects, work programmes and activities.

We want to hear from you about the work we do, what you would like us to do more or less of, and how this might best be reflected in *British Archaeology* magazine. We look forward to hearing your views. 🟩

TROWEL AND ERRO
FIGURING OUT THE TOGETHER THROUG ARCHAEOLOGY
PUBLIC SURVE
Archaeology

***British Archaeology* will be running a readers' survey in 2025 that will include questions about the CBA, its membership and charitable status, as well as its work programmes and activities**

By Sophie Yeo
Harper North
320 pp hb
ISBN 9780008474126
£22


Nature's Ghosts
The world we lost and how to bring it back
'Phenomenally well-informed.' Guy Shrubsole
'Essential, intelligent.' Patrick Barkham
SOPHIE YEO

Nature's Ghosts: The world we lost and how to bring it back

Reviewed by Alison Edwards

In this eminently readable popular work, Yeo deftly blends archaeology, paleoecology, botany, folklore, and a range of sustainable and conservationist case studies. The compelling central argument of the work is that humans have always changed their environments in fundamental and often permanent ways.

By taking a 'deep time' contextual approach to the current climate and environmental crises, Yeo illustrates how constantly natural environments have shifted and adapted in response to changing global temperatures, local weather, and fauna.

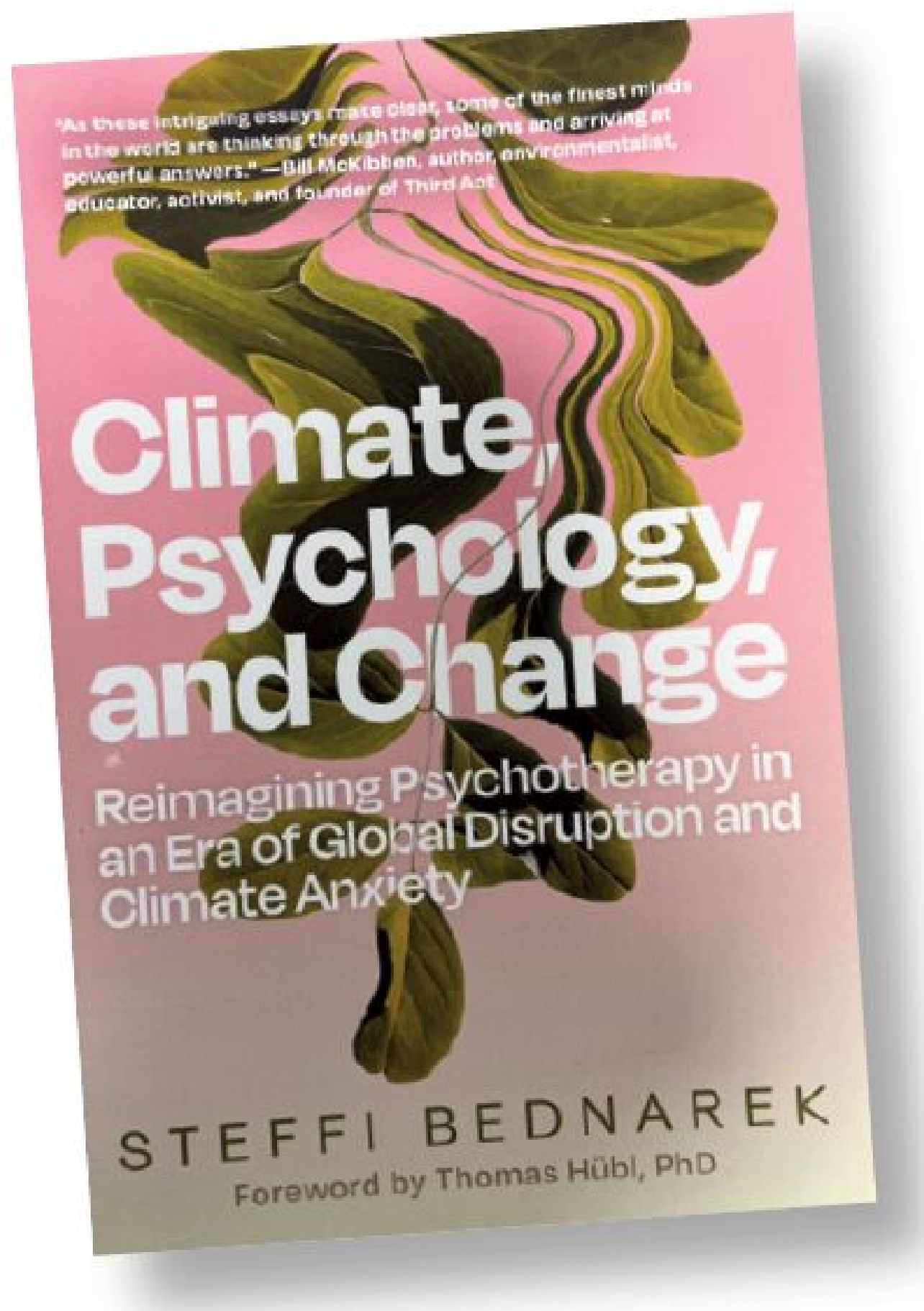
In some ways, the subtitle of the work is misleading, as Yeo is clear that there is no ideal past landscape which can be recreated through any amount of conservation. Instead the social-psychological conclusion suggests that encouraging connections between people and the natural world can encourage a return of traditional stewardship practices.

These sustainable land-use methods, in turn, permit the survival of diverse animal and plant species, and create a more resilient set of natural resources which are more likely to adapt to a changing climate.

The book focuses most on Britain and Europe, but draws on stories from across the globe, and from the great climactic events of the geological past to current social issues, creating a sweeping, yet comprehensible and informative, big-picture narrative.

Yeo's background as an environmental journalist has clearly informed the breadth and readability of the work. I doubt that any archaeologist could read this book without finding new understandings and insights into cultural landscapes, and the constant human-environment tensions which have shaped so much of the surface of the globe.

By Steffi Bednarek
North Atlantic
262 pp
ISBN 9798889840817
£17.99


Climate, Psychology, and Change
Reimagining Psychotherapy in an Era of Global Disruption and Climate Anxiety
STEFFI BEDNAREK
Foreword by Thomas Hübl, PhD

Climate, Psychology, and Change

Reviewed by Neil Redfern

With the intensity of global climate change disrupting the way we engage with the world around us, this book asks how therapists can adapt to promote healing and growth in an increasingly unknown world.

My attention was drawn to it by Harriet Sams, an independent PhD research student at Bournemouth University who has contributed one of the short essays, *Radical Joy for Hard Times* and the "Attending to Place" practice, looking at how we might approach places that have been damaged by human or natural acts.

In one sense it asks how we might act as therapists of the land and how that process can contribute to our own sense of well-being. Her PHD research, *Archaeotherapy: utilising heritage for healing*, has the overall aim to explore the potential of archaeotherapeutic relationships between participants and heritage sites through the theme of connectedness.

It seeks to explore the connection to human heritage of places and sites such as ancient remains, a quarry, a rubbish dump, or rock art for well-being, connectedness, and healing.

Her research is exploring people's current experience of connectedness at human-made sites and if this can be viewed as therapeutic. As such, this book provides wider insight to psychotherapy and its role in helping us understand our world in the present.

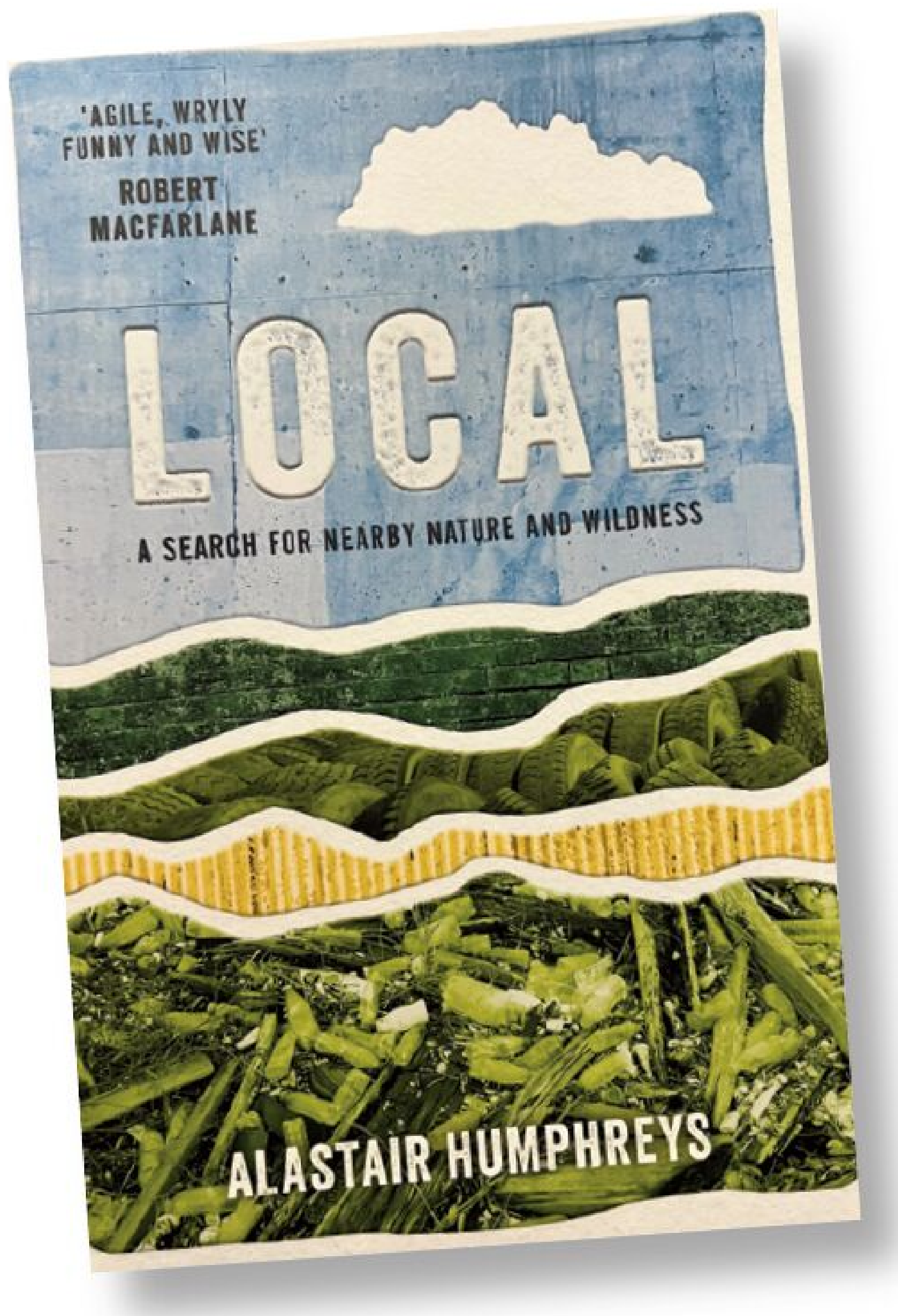
This chimes with some of my own concept of archaeologists being the therapists of deep time. When we look at the world around us through the lens of archaeology, more often than not, it is the trauma of loss, abandonment, and destruction that we are studying.

Yet we have become obsessed with writing the happy stories of these histories as a way of engaging people in what we do.

What might our role be if we adopted a more therapeutic and reflective approach to our archaeology, one that allowed us to acknowledge the messiness and trauma that come with the study of the past?

Local: A Search for Nearby Nature and Wildness

By Alastair Humphreys
Eye Books
384 pp pb
ISBN13 9781785633676
£12.99


'AGILE, WRYLY FUNNY AND WISE'
ROBERT MACFARLANE
LOCAL
A SEARCH FOR NEARBY NATURE AND WILDNESS
ALASTAIR HUMPHREYS

Reviewed by Neil Redfern

Alastair Humphreys is a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year. He has cycled around the world, rowed the Atlantic Ocean, and walked a lap of the M25.

In *Local* he turns that global approach to exploration on its head and looks at his local 'place' through the boundaries of a single map.

What might seem a constricting and artificial approach to place defined by the straight edges of a piece of paper actually become an adventure of exploration, inquisitiveness, and curiosity.

The mark, symbols and words on the map become the clues and keys to endless stories written across our landscape.

By focusing on just a single map Humphreys forces us to focus our attention in one place, and look at it with an intensity, and time (a year) to really get to know and find out about that place.

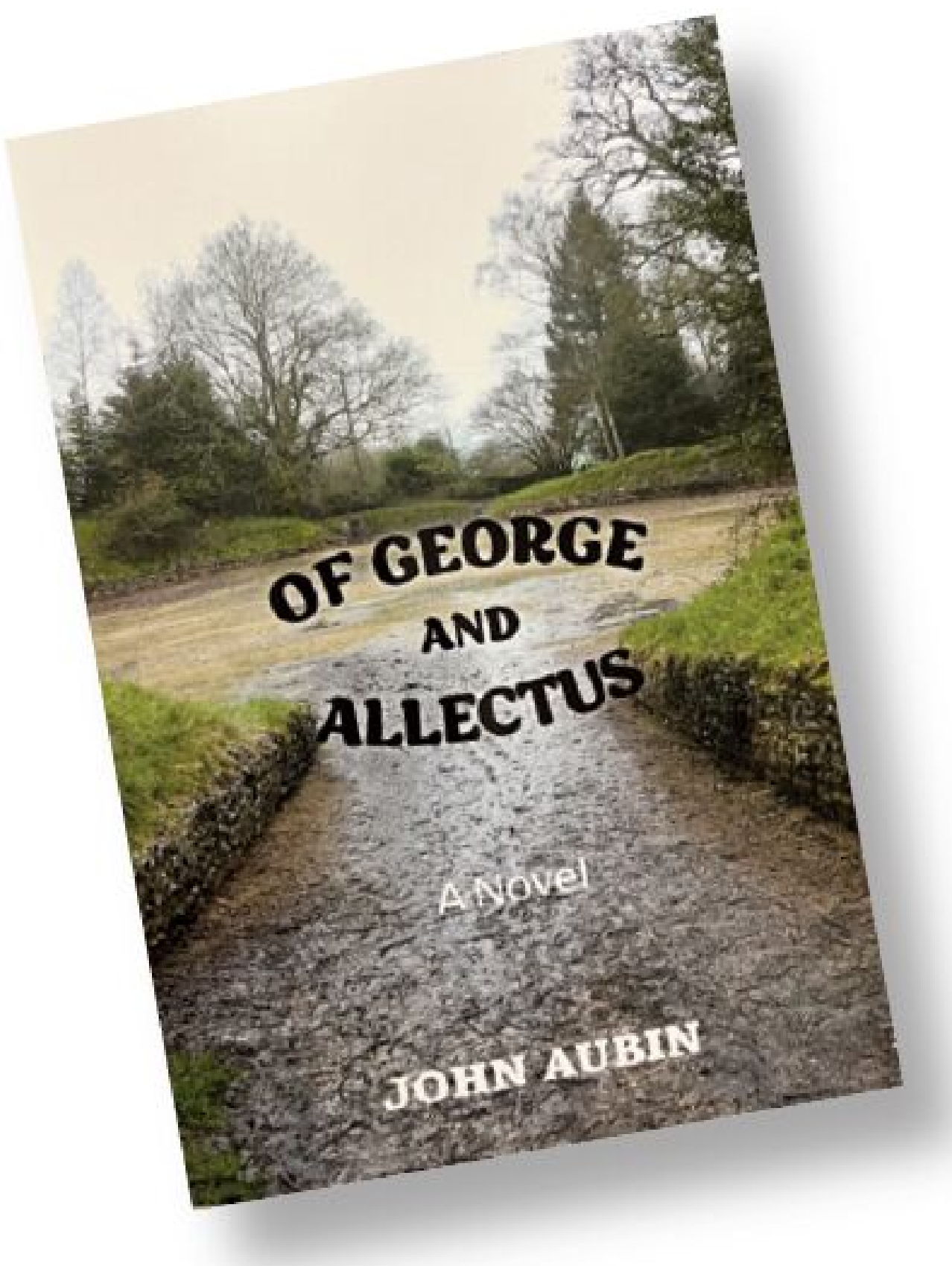
It marks a truth that sometimes the places in which we live are the ones we know least about, our everyday landscapes are the places we only notice when they are gone.

I really like the way his approach focuses attention and provides a simple approach anyone could attempt; all you need is a map and the question why.

While he sets out on a search for nature and wildness, what strikes me is actually this is a search across places shaped by humans in which our connectedness to the land and how we shaped it has often been lost.

This single map-based approach to exploring 'place' would make a great exercise for local groups wanting to try something different in how they explore the world around them.

It could be applied at many different scales and by using historic maps, comparisons could made with the present and what change has happened over time. It is a beautifully simple approach and a reminder that the world around us starts at our own front door.



Of George and Allectus

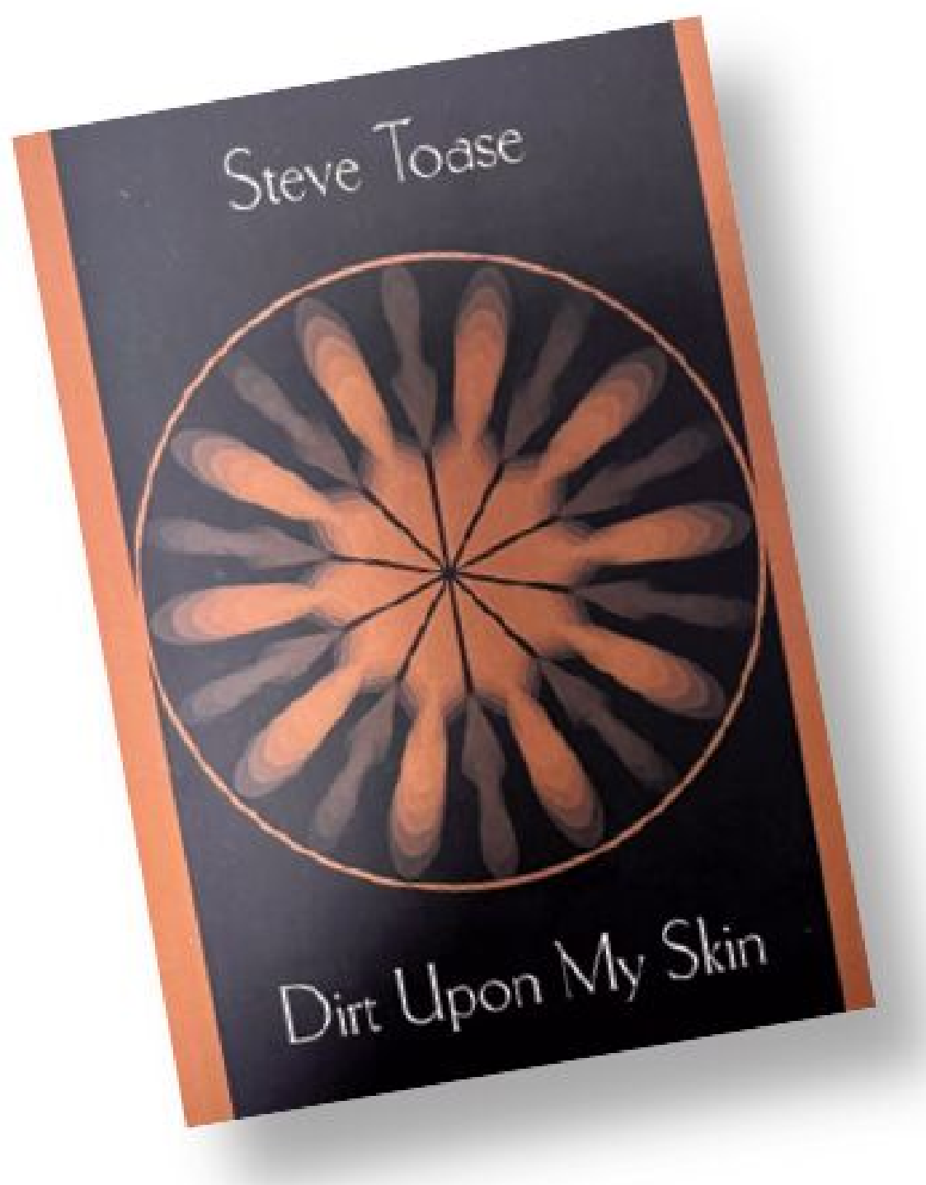
by John Aubin
John Aubin Books
242 pages hb
ISBN 9781739695941
£9.99

Reviewed by Neil Redfern

This tells the story of a young man – George Maple – who takes part in archaeological discoveries at both Blackmoor House (near Selborne in Hampshire) and the Roman town of Silchester.

Later, he joins the Rifles and serves in South Africa in the Zulu and 1st Boer Wars, where he is badly wounded. Returning to Hampshire he finds himself increasingly haunted not only by his own past but by the distant Romans too, whose usurping emperor Allectus is said to have fought a great battle at a site somewhere close by.

This is a book where past and present become increasingly mixed in George's mind and is a vivid reflection of how our own personal trauma can be entwined in our exploration of the past. The author also spent time in South Africa in his early career, returning to the UK and taking up a career in archaeology. That knowledge of both areas shines through in this short novel.



Dirt Upon My Skin Book 37

by Steve Toase
Black Shuck Books
July 2023 288 pages hb
ISBN 9781917173995
£5.99

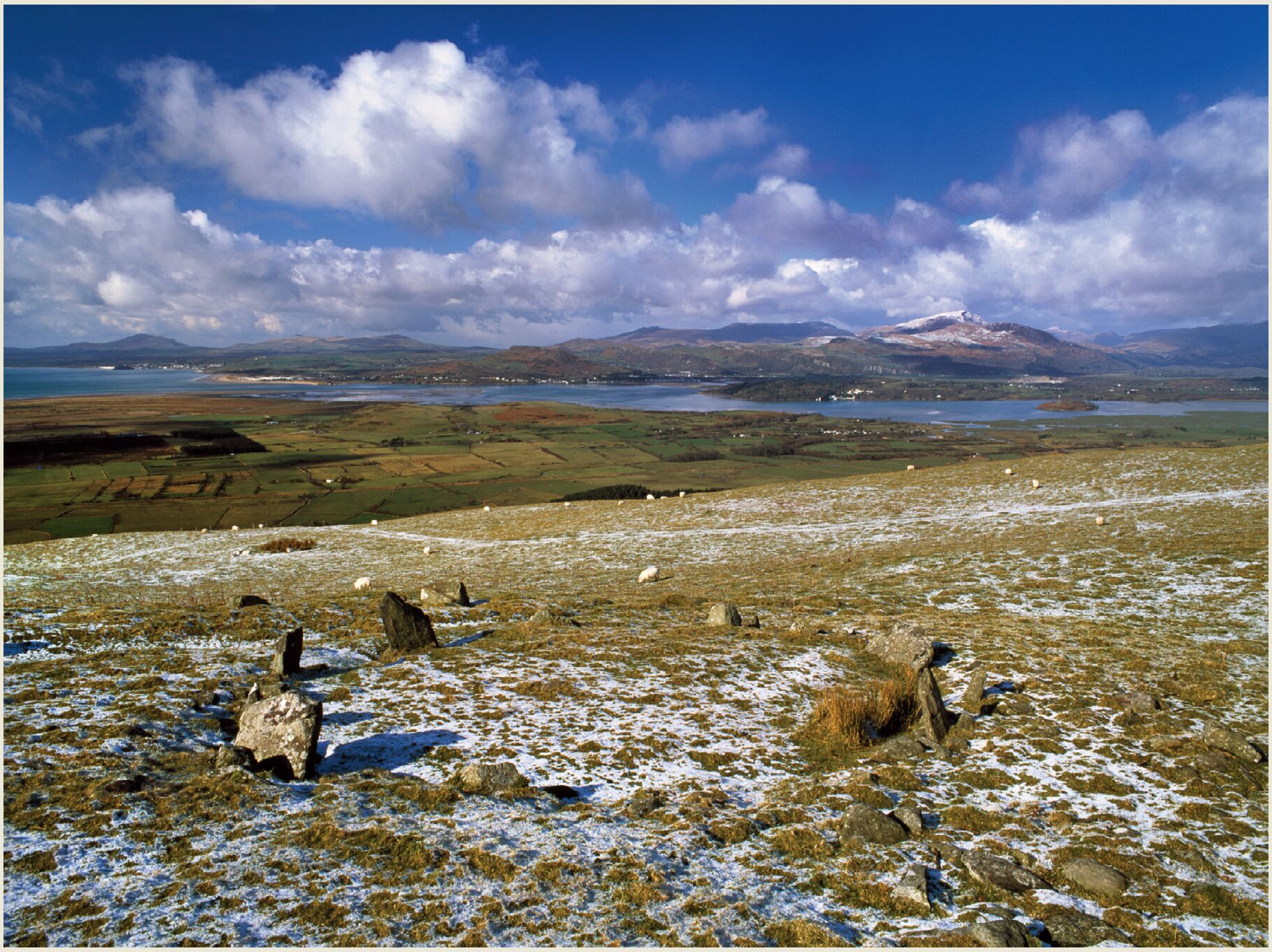
Reviewed by Neil Redfern

This book is by an archaeologist turned writer. In *Dirt Upon My Skin*, Steve Toase sets out a selection of micro-stories featuring peculiar tales of horror and speculative fiction.

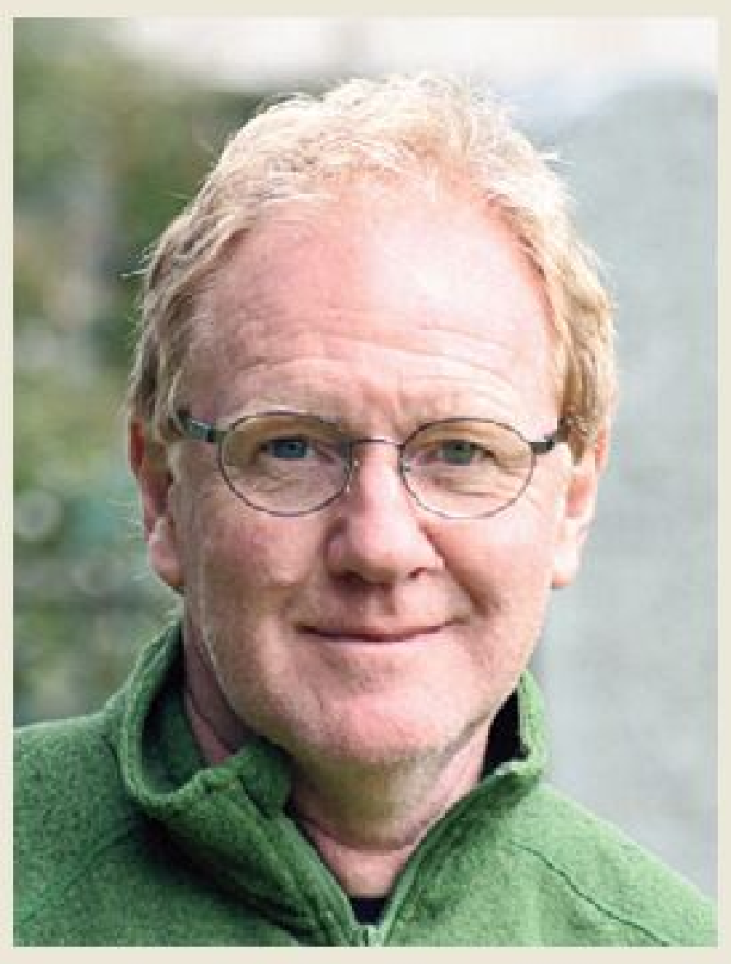
This will not be to everyone's taste, and I am not a great fan of horror, but this is a collection of stories all based in the world of archaeology. Each one just long enough to read before bedtime. But be warned this might not lead to a good night's sleep. Although as an archaeologist I was deeply impressed by his use of *Terminus Post Quem* as the title for one of his stories.

Mick Sharp visits the ring cairns and standing stones located to the east of Harlech, Gwynedd

Moel Goedog West ring cairn



MICK SHARP



In 1188, 'colourful churchman' Gerald of Wales undertook a preaching-tour with Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury to gain support for the Third Crusade; he published his travel-diary in Latin as *Itinerarium Kambriae* (*The Journey Through Wales*). On 9 April, having spent the night in Llanfair south of Harlech, they rode up into the hills using an ancient route which served as the main road until the lowlands were drained in the nineteenth century. Descending to a crossing place near Llandecwyn, they traversed the wide estuarine sands to the Lleyn peninsula.

Their uphill ride would have followed part of a Bronze Age trackway which, beginning at the Llanbedr standing stones (SH 583270), runs northeast from Llanfair up to Moel Goedog and Bryn Cader Faner (SH 647354), around the northern end of the Rhinogs then southeast down to Trawsfynydd where the Romans later built a fort and amphitheatre and, of course, new roads.

The route, possibly connected with metal trading in the Bronze Age, is strung, one might almost say adorned, with over a dozen standing stones and several burial cairns of different forms: Bryn Cader Faner is particularly striking with its dramatic sunburst of angled slabs projecting from a round cairn. Were the ceremonial and funerary monuments gradually placed to mark, and to be admired from, an established path, or did a sacred landscape give birth to the way?

Sandy Gerrard (*stonerows.wordpress.com*) interprets nine of the stones as forming a stone row named variously after Fonllech, Fonlief Hir or Moel Goedog. The row runs SW-NE for 1,898m on a prominent ridge overlooking the sea from Carreg standing stone and cairn (SH 599309) to a fallen stone just north of Moel Goedog East ring cairn (SH 610324). In *A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales: Gwynedd*, Frances Lynch writes that the pair of circles at Moel Goedog "seem to mark a climax to the group of standing stones placed with increasing frequency on the approach" from the south.

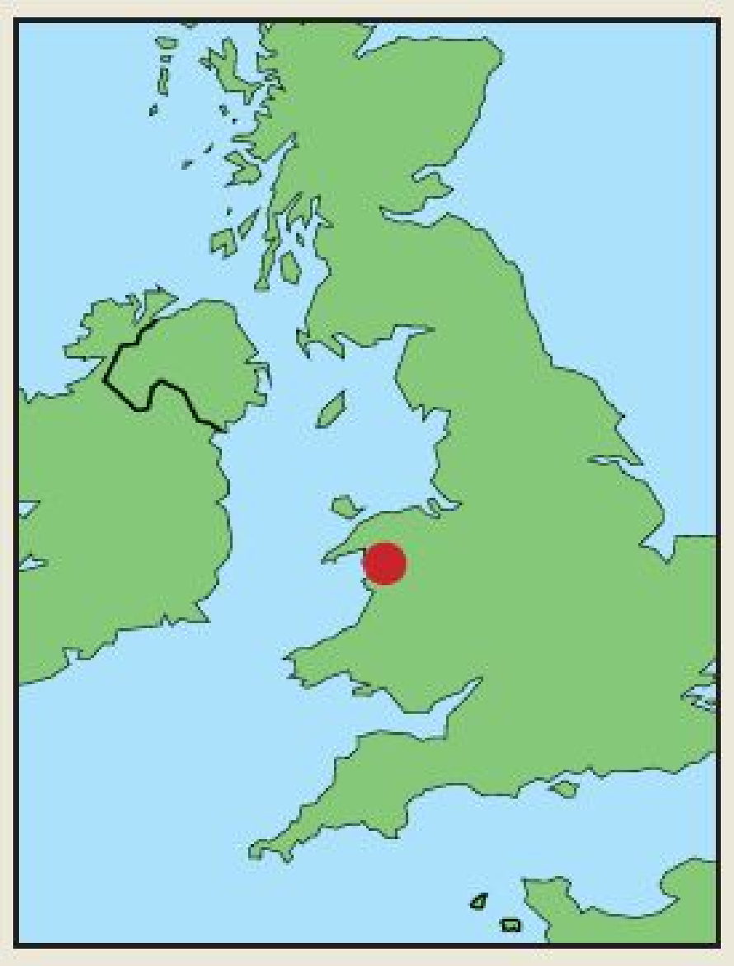
Moel Goedog East, above the track, has a circular stone bank surrounding a ring of large boulders with an artificially levelled central space. Moel Goedog West, below the track, is more complex. It was excavated and restored by Lynch in 1979. Upright stones are set against the inner edge of a low stone bank. The circular interior space was levelled and used for the burial of cremated remains over a period of some three hundred years during the second millennium BC.

Deposits of burnt human bone fragments mixed with charcoal, burnt bone alone, or charcoal on its own were placed in several pits dug at different times. Some of these remains were in pots, others tipped directly into the holes. Soil from around one of the bone caches suggested it had been buried close to the coast before being dug up and reburied here.

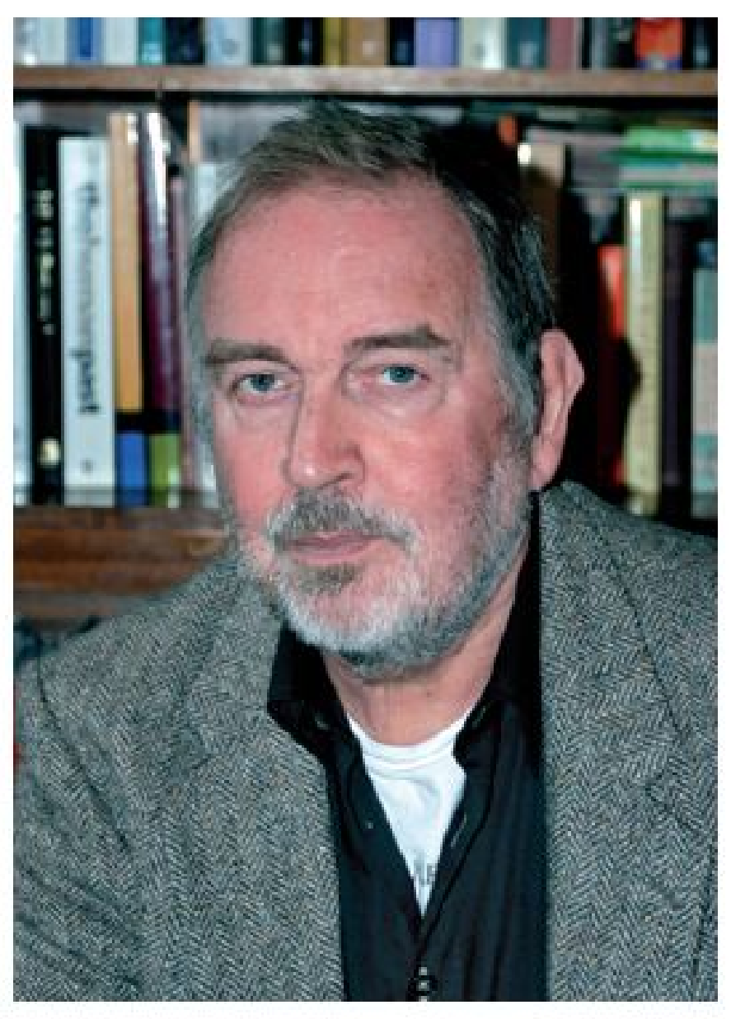
My view, taken on a day of snow showers in February 2004, looks NNW to Morfa Harlech, Tremadog Bay and the peaks of Snowdonia (Eryri). Several years later the field was ploughed right up to the western edge of this Scheduled Ancient Monument. ■

A difficult minor road climbing NE from Llanfair initially follows the ancient route which then continues NE as a track to Moel Goedog LL46 2TP (SH 610324) & beyond. Very limited parking.

Many thanks to Frances Lynch for her help



Dr Greg Bailey on broadcasting



If David Clarke famously asserted that archaeology is what archaeologists do, Steven Spielberg perpetuated a trope of archaeologist as glamorous action adventurer. But however different these characterisations, and no matter how little any fictive glamour resembles painstaking digging and recording, interpretation, publishing and teaching, these worlds can and do collide.

My own research some 20 years ago suggested a correlation between the popular TV archaeology of the day and applications to study at university archaeology departments. Perhaps more surprising was the 'Indie effect' that seemed to suggest that each *Indiana Jones* fantasy adventure film saw increased interest in formal academic archaeology programmes and, I presume, careers in contract archaeology, that is a not entirely glamorous 'digging for a living'.

Raksha Dave, Bettany Hughes and JohnSergent filmingPompeii

RAKSHA DAVE

The image of archaeology and archaeologists seems to carry weight while still being very broadly defined. To mark the 10th anniversary of *Detectorists*, "the sitcom that Thomas Hardy could have written", BBC Radio 4 broadcast a special edition of their film programme *Screenshot* (Prospect Street production for BBC R4 18 October 2024).

Listeners heard contributors discuss screen representations not only of the charming and knowingly-innocent metal detectorists, but also a feature film with an archaeologist turned tomb-raider as protagonist and a timely docu-drama revealing the – I would say heroic – struggle to trace and return plundered artefacts to their place of origin.

With his own search for the cinematic origins of the tomb-raiding trope, in his introduction presenter Mark Kermode offered George Méliès 1899 cinema short of *Cléopâtre* (aka *Robbing Cleopatra's Tomb*). Predictably enough Howard Carter's discovery of the Tutankhamun's tomb was to inspire a whole new raft of mummy-bothering, artefactlooting adventure movies that persistently haunt our screens, from Lara Croft to Tom Cruise's fantastical reboot of the silent original more than a century later.

Kermode talked to Alice Rohrwacher, director of the feature film *La Chimera* (2023; available to stream on Amazon Prime). Set in 1980s Italy, Josh O'Connor plays Arthur, a (presumably) disgraced English archaeologist recently released from jail following a prison sentence for his sideline in looting ancient Etruscan sites. Before long this careworn and somewhat lovelorn tomb raider (tomberolo) is at it again. The plot subsequently spirals around the whereabouts of the (anti)hero's lost loot, the enviable efficacy of his dowsing twig and visionary insight, the questionable necessity of beheading a priceless statue of Artume, a veterinarian turned criminal fence called Spartaco, the trustworthiness of his fellow tomberoli, and an attractive young photographer called Melanie.

Kermode says, "Rohrwacher's film makes complex connections between emotional loss, cultural sale and the interplay between past, present and future." While the Italian director says of her prizewinning film, "*La Chimera* is a mythological animal also something we try to reach but cannot reach.

"My dream was to make a movie about adventure... a lot of people searching for something... of mourning, lost love... because sometimes [while] looking for something we spend our lives."

If Arthur loses contact with 'official archaeology' the filmmaker insists he is still somehow heroic. "In the mythological not the modern sense, the hero is someone who cannot choose his destiny. His destiny is falling down on his head."

If her doomed dishevelled hero, the tomberolo Arthur, doesn't quite bear comparison with the whipwielding action-man, the filmmaker does remember that viewing the Indiana Jones films in her local library made their mark on the child who also wondered at the ancient pottery sherds and artefacts she would find in her local woods.

Co-presenter Ellen E Jones interviewed Mati Diop, a French Senegalese documentary filmmaker, about her latest work, *Dahomey* (Les Film du Bal; Fanta Sy, ARTE France 2024, french language, limited theatrical release). Her timely docu-drama follows the political and physical journey of 26 archaeological treasures looted from the nineteenth century Kingdom of Dahomey in the process of repatriation from Paris to twenty-first century Benin.

Diop maintains that, "Clearly colonisation was a crime against humanity which was quite something from a French perspective and sometimes it's (just) easier to not really face it. This was a feeling of shame and shock, it's easier to not really face it, because if you do you can't go back.

"I think it took me a while to be aware of the violence of the absence of artefacts from the African continent. Because I'm African but also French... this is very dense material, this legacy, to deal with."

Dahomey will hopefully reach our UK cinema as well as our TV screens in the very near future. An Indiana Jones line recycled in *Screenshot*, quotes, "This is the second time I've had to reclaim my property from you. It belongs in a museum!"

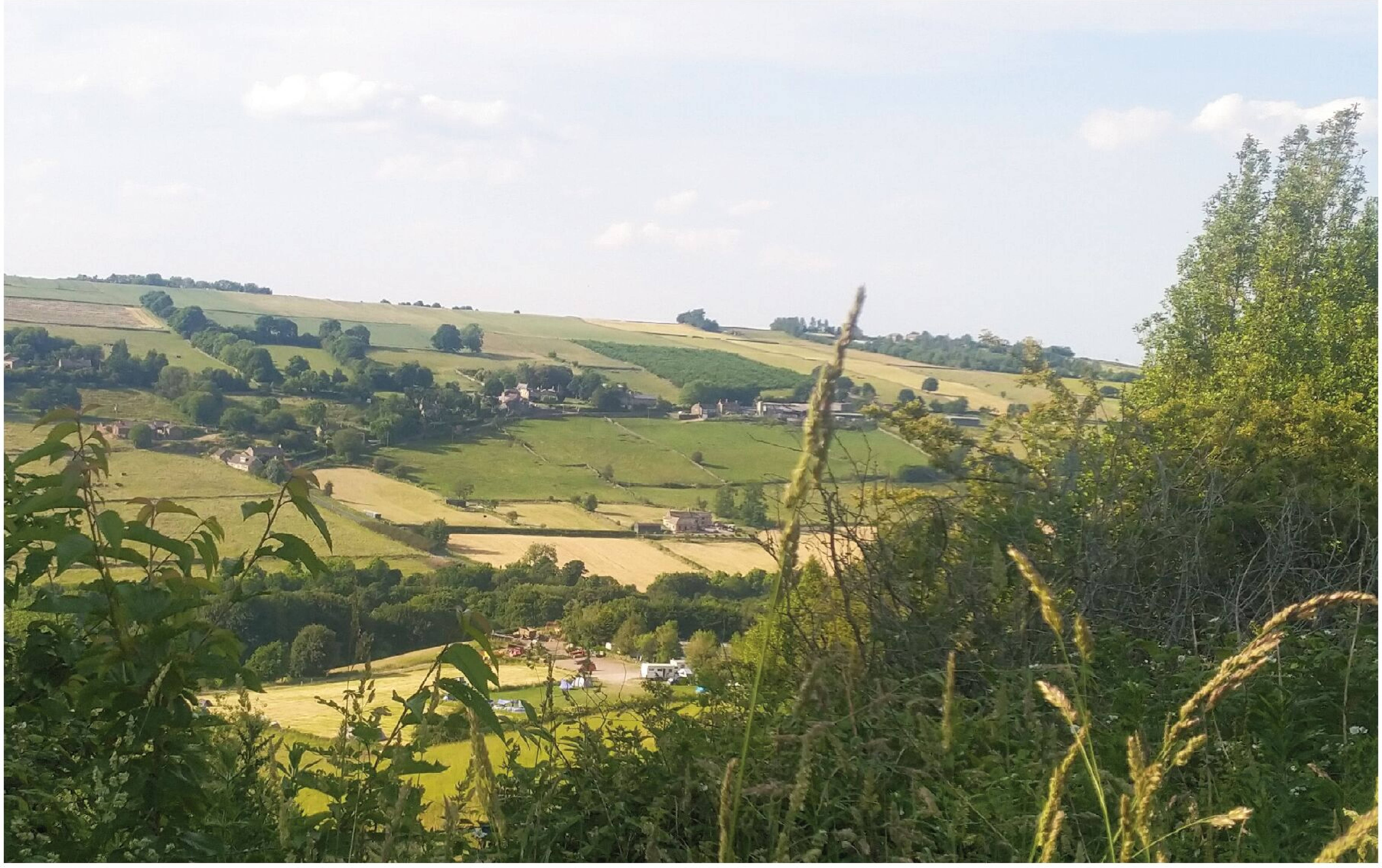
Returning to *Detectorists*, the anniversary of which inspired the all-things-archaeotomberolo edition of *Screenshot*, its writer and co-star claims his initial inspiration and a sense of an ever-present past in the British countryside, came from watching C4's *Time Team*.

A satisfied *British Archaeology* reader writes (albeit a decade ago): *'I remember Mackenzie Crook, by then already basking in widespread critical acclaim, writing to say that a mention in this column on* Detectorists*' first showing was his favourite review.'* ■

casefiles

Catherine Bell, listed buildings caseworker and advocacy manager at the Council for British Archaeology, presents an example from the council's files

77. Rails House Farm, Sheffield



ROBIN HUGHES, HALLAMSHIRE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Top: Rails House Farm within the dispersed settlement on the northern hillside

Aspects of the historic environment that are highly valued locally, perhaps typifying the local character of a place and contributing to a locally valued 'sense of place', are often undesignated.

Designation criteria stipulate key criteria for sites to meet, predominantly around age, rarity, architectural quality, and being exemplars of a given building typology. The criteria often preclude the designation of sites which have been considerably altered, especially during the twentieth century.

Building adaptations illustrate shifts in peoples' requirements, tastes, and the social and economic backdrop of a place. Such changes can have archaeological interest as a record of the relationship between successive people and places, and articulate the character of a place.

Buildings that do not meet designation criteria are widely identified as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) and can be equally valued for their contribution to the character of a locality as listed buildings. NDHAs are recognised in planning policies but with a reduced level of protection compared with designated sites. Their lack of designation reduces restrictions on the extent of change that can be carried out to NDHAs.

As such, they represent opportunity spaces for adaptive reuse in line with a place's continuing evolution. From an environmental perspective, not wasting the embodied carbon in standing buildings is an additional reason to adapt and reuse structures that contribute to a place's character.

The flip side of the low level of protection for NDHAs in planning policies is their vulnerability to demolition, entailing the loss of locally valued landmarks and harming local character.

Through our casework, the CBA champions the adaptive reuse of NDHAs, especially where they contribute to local character. In 2023, the CBA objected to proposals to demolish the farmhouse and entire agricultural range at Rails House Farm, an NDHA on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

We were delighted to learn recently of Sheffield City Council's decision to refuse the application.

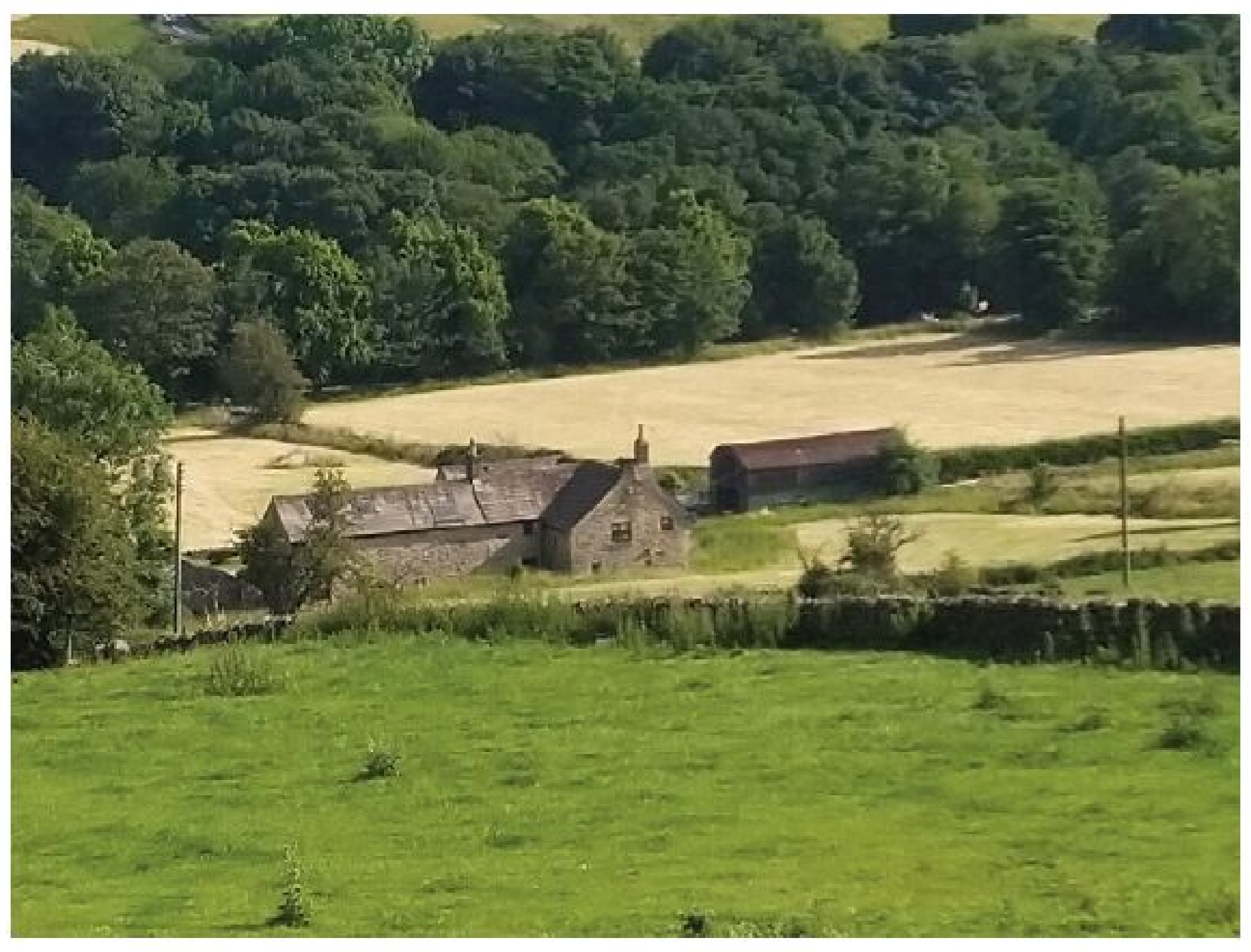
Although there is little information about it, stylistically Rails House Farm appears to date from the eighteenth century. The surrounding topography and roads make it likely that an agricultural holding at the site will have been established a lot earlier.

The farm is highly visible in an open area of fields below (and within) a dispersed rural settlement. It lies within the Green Belt and an Area of High Landscape Value in the Rivelin Valley District of Sheffield, just 100m from the boundary of the Peak District National Park.

The materials and form of the farmhouse, conjoined barn, and curtilage agricultural structures typify the local vernacular traditions. As a result, the site contributes to the group value of buildings in this dispersed settlement, which are appreciated together on this side of the valley.

Many of the neighbouring sites within this dispersed settlement are listed at Grade II. That Rails House Farm is not designated most likely reflects the extent of twentieth century alterations, including the internal strip out of historical features. Arguably, this makes the site more easily adaptable to contemporary requirements.

Left: Rails House Farm from below, showing the proximity of neighbouring sites



Left: Rear of Rails House Farm with house to the right of the conjoined combination barn

ROBIN HUGHES, HALLAMSHIRE HISTORIC BUILDINGS [2]

Proposals sought to clear the site and construct a vast new single dwelling with a footprint larger than the existing farmstead and a distinct contemporary design. Not only did the application entail the total loss of an NDHA, but the new dwelling would also appear alien within the sensitive landscape context and harm the setting of nearby designated sites.

Proposals to clear the site were founded on an ovrview of the farmstead's contribution to the historic landscape character of the area. When there are a lot of commonalities between vernacular sites, like farmsteads, in an area, it is easy to interpret NDHAs as commonplace and insignificant.

However, conforming to regional characteristics makes sites (at least) regionally important.

There is huge variety between rural landscape characteristics across the UK. In England these are captured in Natural England's 159 National Character Area Profiles (NCAs), which are a wonderful resource that can be searched online.

Each NCA represents an area of distinct and recognisable character at the national scale. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape, not county or district boundaries. This makes them a good framework for decision-making and planning for future change.

Landscape character is fundamentally informed by topography and geology, which dictate the soil type, determining the agricultural use, as well as the form and materials of buildings.

Farm buildings, developed over the course of centuries, for management of the landscape are rooted in the historic identity and development of an area. Historic farmsteads that typify local vernacular traditions, therefore, contribute to an area's landscape characteristics.

Historic England has compiled Farmstead and Landscape Statements (freely available online) to support Natural England's NCAs. The CBA find these invaluable in assessing the contribution of rural NDHAs to local historic landscape character as part of our casework.

The contribution Rails House Farm makes to its context can be appreciated from the way it typifies the surrounding Landscape Character Area. Known nationally as the 'Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe' (NCA 37) and locally as Sheffield's 'Pastoral Upland River Valley', this area is characterised by steep topography, woodland, permanent pasture, stone walls, and scattered gritstone farms.

In defining the historic character of farmsteads in the Southern Pennine Fringe area, Historic England notes that, "linear farmsteads predominate, with dispersed layouts at the meeting point of routeways and some, particularly on manorial and gentry sites, developing into courtyards."

"These are set in landscapes that mostly result from the piecemeal enclosure of woodland and moorland from the medieval period, and from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The building stock is dominated by combination barns and housing for cattle, and construction in stone and slate with remnants of earlier timber- and cruck-frames.

"Within a national context, features of special significance include farmsteads that have retained their historic layout with eighteenth century and earlier buildings, especially combination barns and cattle housing from the eighteenth century and earlier."

The CBA identified these features at Rails House Farm and objected to its demolition on these grounds. The CBA was far from alone in objecting to the proposed demolition and redevelopment of the site.

We first became aware of the damaging proposals through our valued relationship with Hallamshire Historic Buildings group, who made a vociferous objection to the scheme. These objections were echoed by the Peak District National Park Authority, as well as multiple local residents.

As well as the specifics of this application, the CBA objected to the principle of demolishing a range of historic buildings, such as Rails House Farm, to create an alternative design of dwelling as incompatible with Sheffield's declaration of a climate emergency and pledge to become a zero-carbon city by the start of the next decade.

We hope to see an application to adapt and reuse these historic buildings come forward. ■

Dr Claire Corkill, CBA development manager, visits a hidden gem in rural Perthshire

Innerpeffray Library – a visit to Scotland's oldest public lending library

Located next to the River Earn, Innerpeffray is a beautiful secluded spot in rural Perthshire, Scotland.

Today, Innerpeffray is home to Scotland's oldest free public lending library, a chapel, and Victorian schoolhouse, all of which are open for the public to visit.

It is a quiet, peaceful place surrounded by fields and trees where, if you are lucky, you might spot a red squirrel, and it is easy to think this is an unusual place to find a library. In fact, this small settlement has a long and fascinating history.

From at least the Roman period, Innerpeffray was a key location on a main routeway through the landscape providing a place to safely cross the River Earn. The remnant of the old road can still be seen as a deep depression running alongside the site up from the river.

This was a critical crossing place, with an expansive Roman fort located at Strageath just across the river, while in the opposite direction the road runs through to Perth with signal stations located along the Gask Ridge.

The road continued in use through the medieval period with the building of the nearby Augustinian Abbey of Inchaffray. During the development of the site, the monks cut a drainage channel, known as Pow Water, down to the River Earn, leading to the naming of the site – Inner, at the mouth of, and Peffray, the Pow or Peffray. In fact, monastic records are where the name Innerpeffray was first recorded in 1283.

DR CLAIRE CORKILL [2]

The current chapel at Innerpeffray was built in 1508 by John, Lord Drummond, but the altar and ancient yew trees surrounding the building suggest this is also the site of an earlier medieval Chapel of St Mary. The chapel is free to enter and more information about the archaeology of the building can be found on the Historic Environment Scotland website. If you visit, make sure to look up in the west end to see the beautiful remains of some original ceiling decoration and take the time to explore the churchyard, which has some fascinating gravestones.

The library was founded by David Drummond, third Lord Madertie, in 1680. Originally, over 400 books were stored in a very small room at the west end of the chapel. This space ultimately proved inadequate and in the early eighteenth century, Robert Hay Drummond took over the estate and raised funds for a new building. In 1762, the library was moved to its current home adjacent to the chapel in a purpose-built neo-classical building.

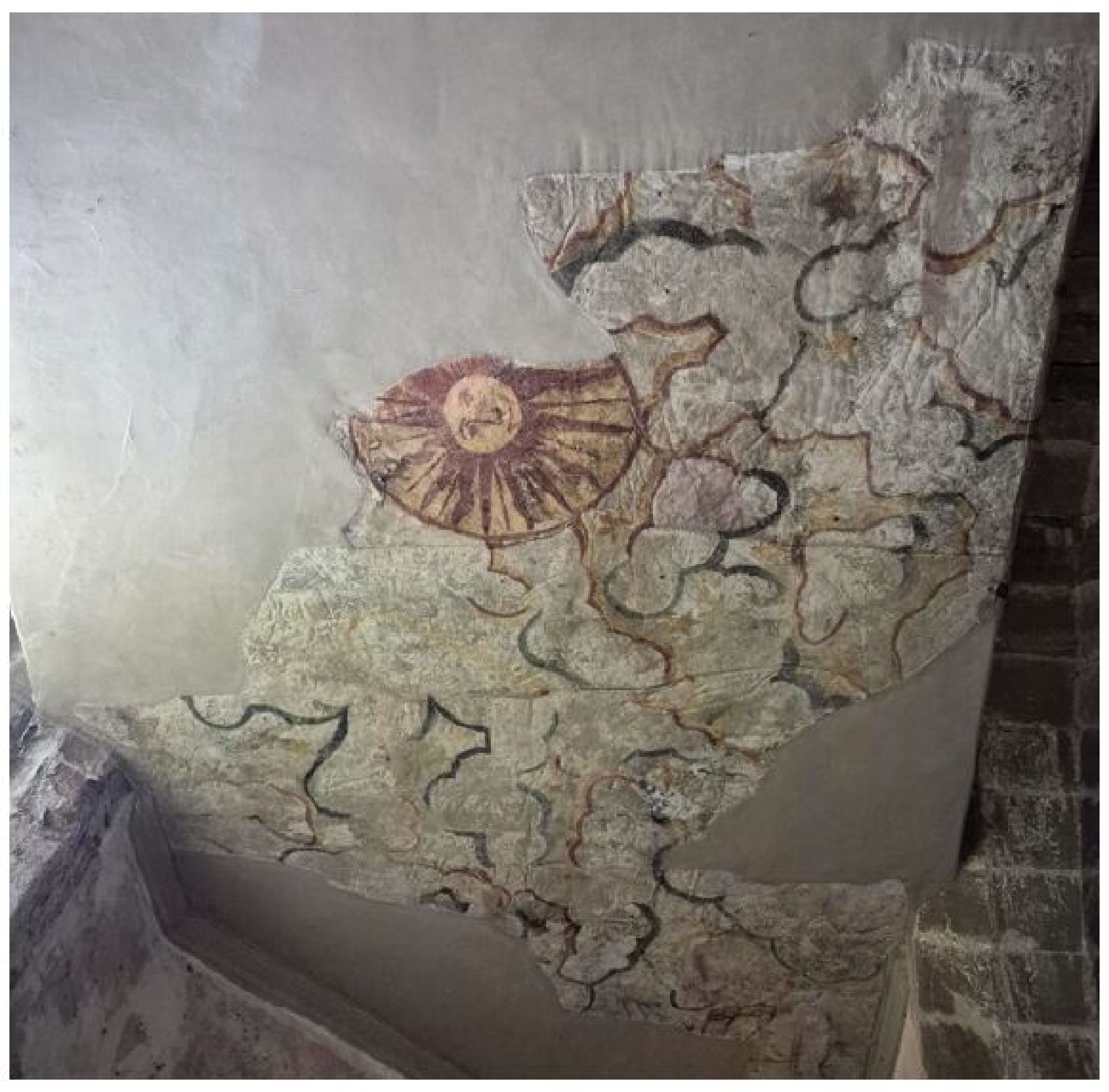
The collection of over 5,000 books is expansive, covering a wide range of subjects including politics, botany, geography, and history, and dates from 1476 down to the present day. Highlights of the collection include a beautifully illustrated world atlas (*Atlas Novus*, Amsterdam, 1638) and what is thought to be the world's smallest bible. Many of the books are signed by Lord Madertie, creating a tangible connection with the founder.

Among the most exciting things in the library are the records books, which detail the names, address, and profession of visitors and lenders, highlighting the diverse range of people taking advantage of the opportunity to access books free of charge, from wealthy travellers to local labourers.

In Scotland, education between the ages of five and 13-years-old became compulsory in 1872, while in 1890 school fees were abolished, increasing literacy

Top: Volunteers Doug Graham and Shirley Williams with the Atlas Novus in the library's reading room

Right: The reading room at Innerpeffray Library



***Far left top:* Original medieval artwork on the ceiling of Innerpeffray Chapel**

***Far left below:* The original library room inside Innerpeffray Chapel**

and making places such as Innerpeffray Library incredibly valuable to those who would not otherwise be able to access such a range of books. Research is currently underway to dive deeper into the stories of those who used the library.

The library continued as a lending library until 1968 and while you can no longer take books home with you, the library is visited regularly by researchers interested in the collection. Alongside scholars, the library sees around 3,000 visitors each year; a similar number also visit to enjoy the heritage trail which opened in 2019.

The library is run by the Governors of the Innerpeffray Mortification, a mortification in this case being a permanent endowment which, thanks to Madertie's pragmatism, has ensured the library has remained open for over 300 years. Day-to-day management of the site is undertaken by Lara Haggerty in her role as Keeper of Books.

In 2024, Lara was shortlisted for Marsh Community Archaeologist of the Year, highlighting her commitment to the library over the last 15 years.

When asked what she enjoyed most about working at Innerpeffray Lara said: "The extraordinary connection between history and the present, meeting people and sharing the amazing story as well as the physical nature of the books and the beauty of the place."

***Centre:* Inside Innerpeffray Chapel, looking towards the medieval altar**

A team of passionate and committed volunteers support the running of the library offering tours to the public and undertaking their own research into the collection. One of their most significant tasks each year is the annual clean when every single book is removed from the shelf, has its condition checked and is carefully dusted. Speaking with volunteers Doug Graham and Shirley Williams, their enthusiasm for the library, its story, and the collection is clear. Their presence really brings the library to life, showing how relevant it remains as a place of learning, collaboration, and community.

Innerpeffray Library is open from 1 March to the end of October, from Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-5pm, and 2-5pm on Sundays. Tours with one of the friendly and knowledgeable volunteers are £10 for adults, free for under-16s, and can be booked via the website. There are also a wide range of events, concerts and workshops throughout the year. If you are unable to visit in person you can also take a virtual tour for a donation of £2.50.

ROBERT Burns

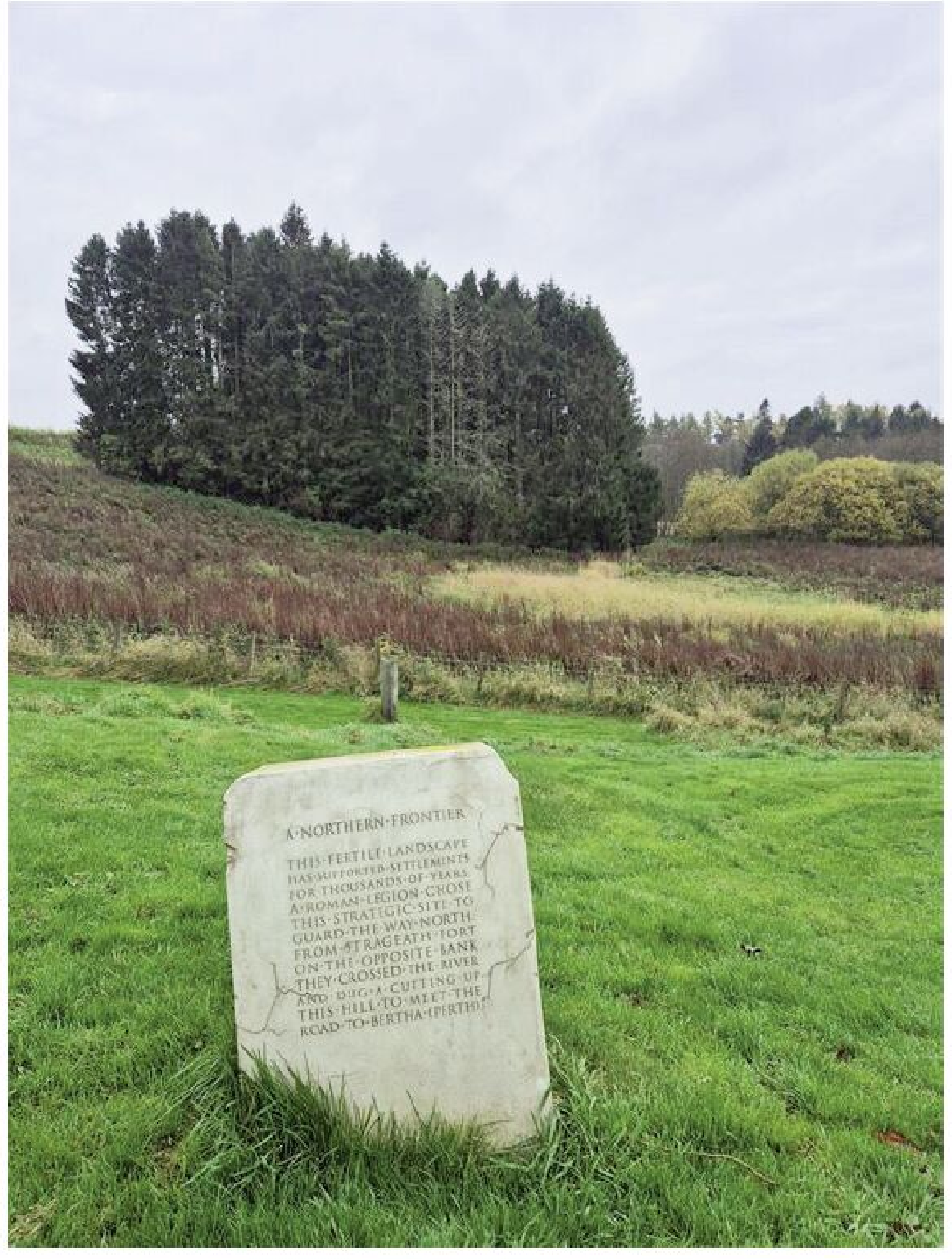
***Left:* Lara Haggerty, Keeper of Books at the library, with volunteers Gillean Ford and Doug Graham**

More information about the library along with details of events and tours can be found at www.innerpeffray library.co.uk/. 🟩

You can view the Historic Environment record for the library, here: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/innerpeffray-chapel/

***Left:* Innerpeffray Chapel and Library**

***Centre left:* The Roman Road at Innerpeffray**



A·NORTHERN·FRONTIER
THIS·FERTILE·LANDSCAPE HAS·SUPPORTED·SETTLEMENTS FOR·THOUSANDS·OF·YEARS A·ROMAN·LEGION·CHOSE THIS·STRATEGIC·SITE·TO GUARD·THE·WAY·NORTH FROM·STRAGEATH·FORT ON·THE·OPPOSITE·BANK THEY·CROSSED·THE·RIVER AND·DUG·A·CUTTING·UP THIS·HILL·TO·MEET·THE ROAD·TO·BERTHA·(PERTH)

***Left:* Along the heritage walk at Innerpeffray**

DR CLAIRE CORKILL [7]

Rachel Arbury, youth engagement assistant at the Council for British Archaeology, reports on the world of young and aspiring archaeologists

Young Archaeologists' Club's annual Dig It! Diaries 2024

CBA [2]

Top: Finn exploring the recently discovered medieval well at Bamburgh Castle

Right: David holding finds from Cookham Monastery

Left: Archie excavating at Bamburgh Castle

The Young Archaeologists' Club's annual Dig It! competition returned for the summer of 2024. The competition offers club members between eight and 16-years-old a chance to work alongside archaeologists at some fantastic sites across the UK.

In 2024, we had six sites across the United Kingdom, where 15 winners experienced a range of field-based tasks, such as digging and washing finds. Each winner also received a haversack of archaeological tools kindly donated by Past Horizons. Some of the winners wrote about their experiences, and you can read how they got on below.

Lost Castle of Con O'Neil, Castlereagh

First, the competition headed to Northern Ireland, where the team at Queen's University Belfast were looking for the Lost Castle of Con O'Neil in Castlereagh. Ethan, from Belfast YAC, told us: "Brian, the site director, showed me the site and explained some of the history, and then we started digging. I found a few pieces of glass, some charcoal, and lots of rocks.

"However, my most interesting find came later in the day. I was digging with my trowel when I came across a large chunk of dirt that didn't break apart. I decided to show it to Brian.

It wasn't a clump of dirt, but it was the tip of a knife or a broadsword.

"It was probably from the start of the seventeenth century. This was quite an exciting find."

Bamburgh Castle

The Bamburgh Research Project (BRP) were continuing their excavations at Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland, and invited Dig It! competition winners to join them.

Archie, from Bexley YAC, let us know that he had: "An amazing day digging at Bamburgh with BRP staff, Lauren and Constance, and the other winners and their adults. The best bit was digging in a real-life trench and finding real archaeology, where I uncovered more of a staircase to the beach."

Finn, from The Auckland Project YAC, told us: "I have always wanted to be an archaeologist and today was my chance. In the afternoon we did some finds cleaning. We had to be very delicate as the finds were extremely fragile and old. I cleaned shells, pigs' teeth and bones.

"To end the most fantastic day we went to a secluded part of the castle on the beach and started to dig: My job was to dig near a stair way and flatten the terrain. I felt like I was a real archaeologist, it was spectacular."

Irchester

The University of Leicester offered the next opportunity: To excavate with them at Irchester, within the Chester House Estate. Ben, from Bexley YAC, said: "I was so excited that I had won the competition. Digging there was really special, and I loved having my own tools to dig with. The most special thing was uncovering two pieces of pottery that had obviously been joined to each other at some stage.

"It was also really special looking around the ARC there and seeing finds from all around the area. My favourite was a Roman nine men's morris board carved into stone."

Cookham Anglo-Saxon Monastery

The competition then took a royal turn as

the University of Reading invited winners to dig at the site of an Anglo-Saxon monastery in Cookham, which was thought to have been placed under the rule of Queen Cynethryth, the widow of the powerful King Offa of Mercia. It sounds like they had some wet weather to contend with…

David, a member at North Wiltshire YAC told us: "The first scheduled day was too wet to dig so instead I got an opportunity to learn some valuable information about bones from Michaela, the osteoarchaeologist, and take part in some finds washing.

"Luckily, the weather improved by the middle of the week, so I was able to return for a full day on-site. Josh organised for me to help with the digging and cleaning up of a wall they believed to be part of the bakery.

"While cleaning it up we found some pottery sherds which we think were Anglo-Saxon."

Lucy, from Northamptonshire YAC, said: "I spent a fascinating day on the site and learnt about the different features and building footprints at Cookham.

"I was excavating the footprint of a possible oven inside what may have been a bakery and, in the afternoon, I moved to a pit where I found two animal jawbones (maybe a pig and sheep), an almost complete cow shoulder blade, and a couple of oyster shells. I really enjoyed being part of the team and everyone was very friendly and welcoming."

Bedrule Castle

In September, the competition headed to the Scottish Borders to join archaeologists from Archaeology Scotland on their hunt for Bedrule's Lost Castle.

Clara from Aberdeen YAC shared her experience with us: "In the last hour of the afternoon, I moved my trowel and found a curved edge. Mum and me carefully moved the soil away and tapped on it gently, I thought it was bone.

"Calipso and Andy came to look and were very serious as I excavated it further unearthing a ball joint. We carefully lifted a larger stone from its end to see its full length and Andy relaxed. It wasn't long enough to be human.

"I was a bit disappointed, but Andy wasn't, the dig could continue. Lots of people watched me excavate the bone and it felt very exciting."

Erddig Hall

Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology provided the final opportunity for winners to experience a dig at Erddig Hall in Wrexham. The team were continuing their search for the remains of a range of lost eighteenth century buildings

Idris, from Wales Online YAC, said: "I loved my day at the Erddig Hall dig. The archaeologists made me feel like part of the team and I really liked the biscuits.

"I found a piece of pottery called agateware and it fitted to other pieces of a bowl that they found before. Because of the layer the bowl was found in we could know the date of the building. I will be an archaeologist when I am older."

Emily, from Mersey and Dee YAC, also shared her experience of the dig: "We were digging where there had been a house knocked down in the 1700s. After a while of digging up slate and tiles, I spotted a white piece of pottery and carefully dug it out of the dirt using the tools that I had won as part of the competition.

Top left: Lucy excavating at Cookham Monastry

Above: Clara excavating at Bedrule Castle

Left: Idris holding a piece of post-medieval pottery from the dig

"Not long after, I found a gigantic piece of the same pottery and it turns out that it was a pot from the 1720s."

The Dig It! Competition, and the fantastic opportunities it gives YAC members, would not be possible without the archaeological units, universities and organisations that offer to host winners at their sites.

We are so grateful to them and would love to hear from any sites willing to host winners next year. We would also like to give a special thanks to Past Horizons, who sponsored the competition by providing bags of archaeological tools for the winners.

Keep an eye out for next year's competition which will be launching next spring. ■

Ogham

Learn about this early medieval alphabet and create your own writing in this YAC activity

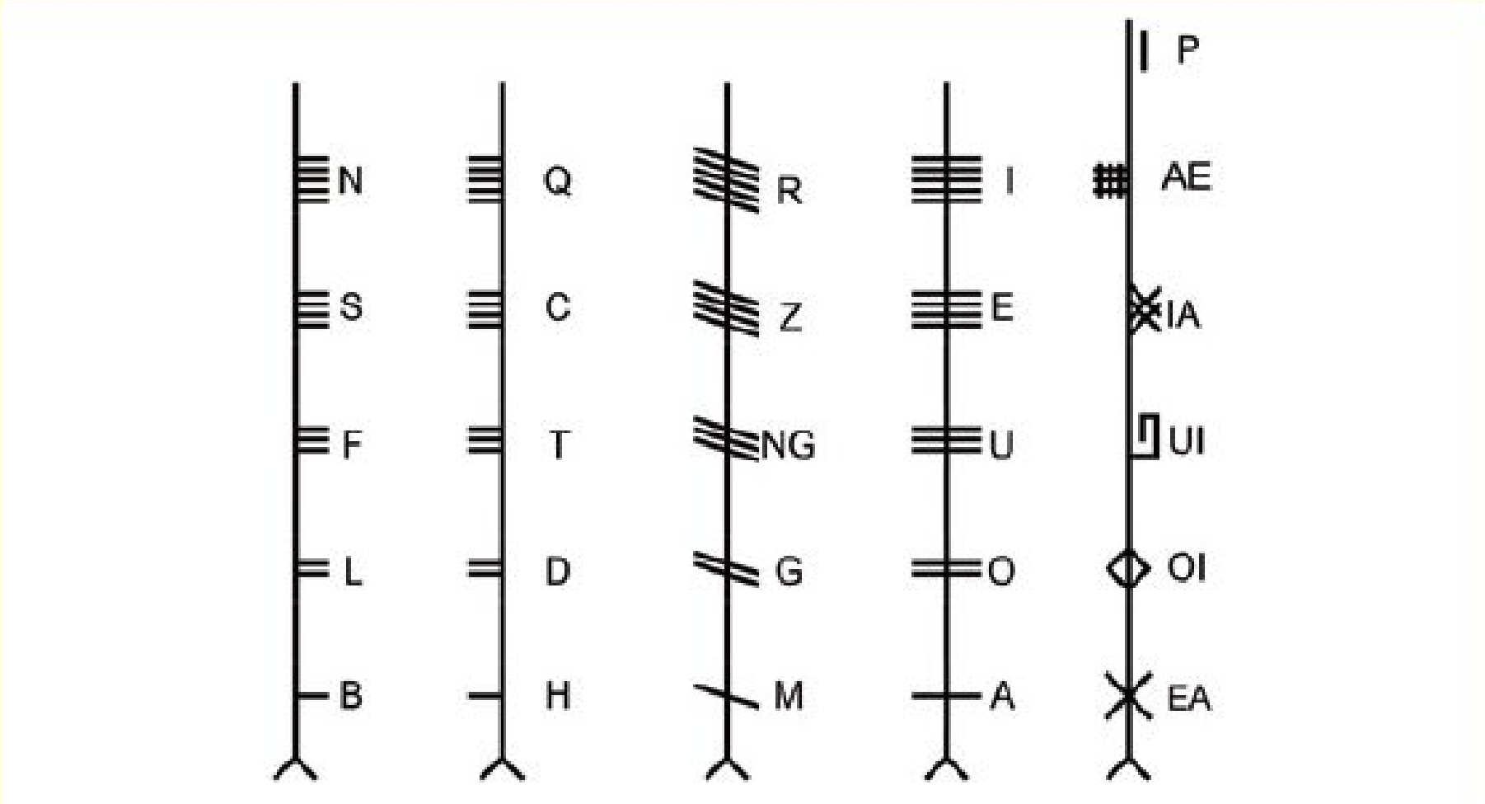
Activity 1: Translate something into ogham

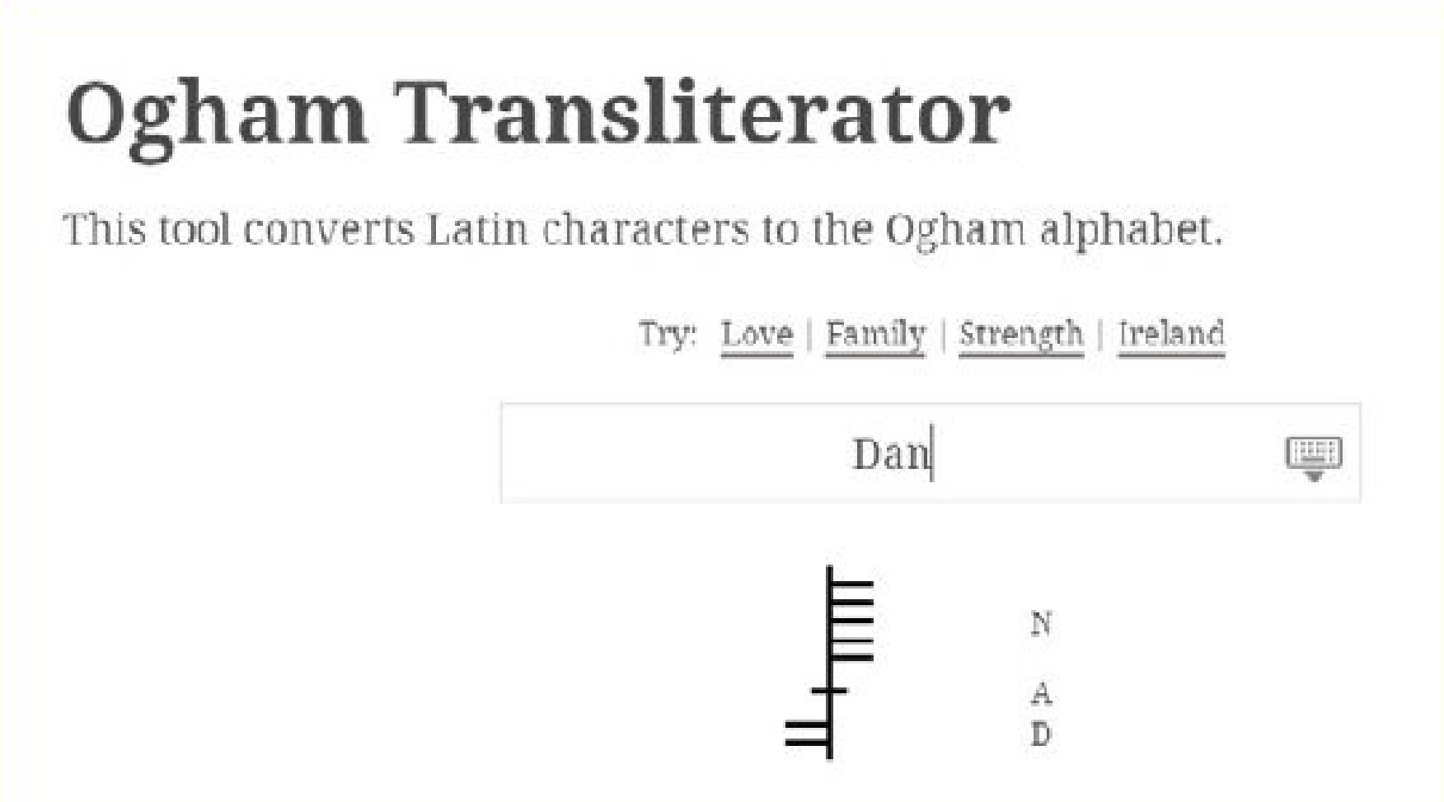
You will need:

- A copy of the ogham alphabet and/or the translation website (below left)
- Paper, pencil/pen/crayon
- A few words to translate (you could use your name or the name of a favourite pet, for example).

Things to think about:

- Not all modern letters are represented in ogham. The letters J, K, V, W, X, and Y are not in the ogham alphabet. You read ogham from the bottom to the top. Take a look at the example, below right:
- Starting at the bottom of your page, use the ogham alphabet to spell out your word(s).
- If you are using the website, you can check if you have written it correctly.
- Look after your translated ogham, as you will use this in Activity 2.





Ogham Transliterator

This tool converts Latin characters to the Ogham alphabet.

Try: Love | Family | Strength | Ireland

Dan

The Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is a network of over 75 branches all around the United Kingdom. The club is aimed at young people aged 8 to 16 who have a passion for archaeology, history, and heritage. Alongside local branches, the YAC website – accessible at https://www.yac-uk.org/ – offers a large collection of resources and activities, including crafts, baking, building surveys, and photogrammetry skills.

In this edition, we've taken another dive into the archives to bring you a fun, hands-on activity to try at home.

In 2023, the Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) and Heneb: Gwynedd Archaeology, kindly funded by Cadw, joined together to create a bi-lingual activity resource pack that could be utilised by our branches in Wales, providing an insight into Welsh archaeology and heritage for our wider YAC network.

The resource contains five activities based on Welsh archaeology, from the Neolithic through to the modern day. You can view the whole resource in both English and Welsh by using the corresponding QR codes below.

One of our favourite activities from the pack focuses on ogham. This is an early medieval alphabet mainly used for writing an early form of the Irish language. Most surviving examples of ogham inscriptions are in Ireland, but there are 34 examples in Wales, with most found in the southwest.

Examples of ogham inscriptions in Wales provide us with evidence of contact between the Irish and the Welsh at the end of the Roman period.

Surviving examples of ogham are from the fifth and sixth centuries (but there may have been some on other materials). Many stones have a Latin inscription on them, with a repeat in ogham.

If you want to explore this fascinating script further, take a look at other examples on Archwilio, a Wales-wide searchable database of archaeological and historical information. You could search for examples across Wales. ■

English language

Welsh language

Visit www. yac-uk.org for more

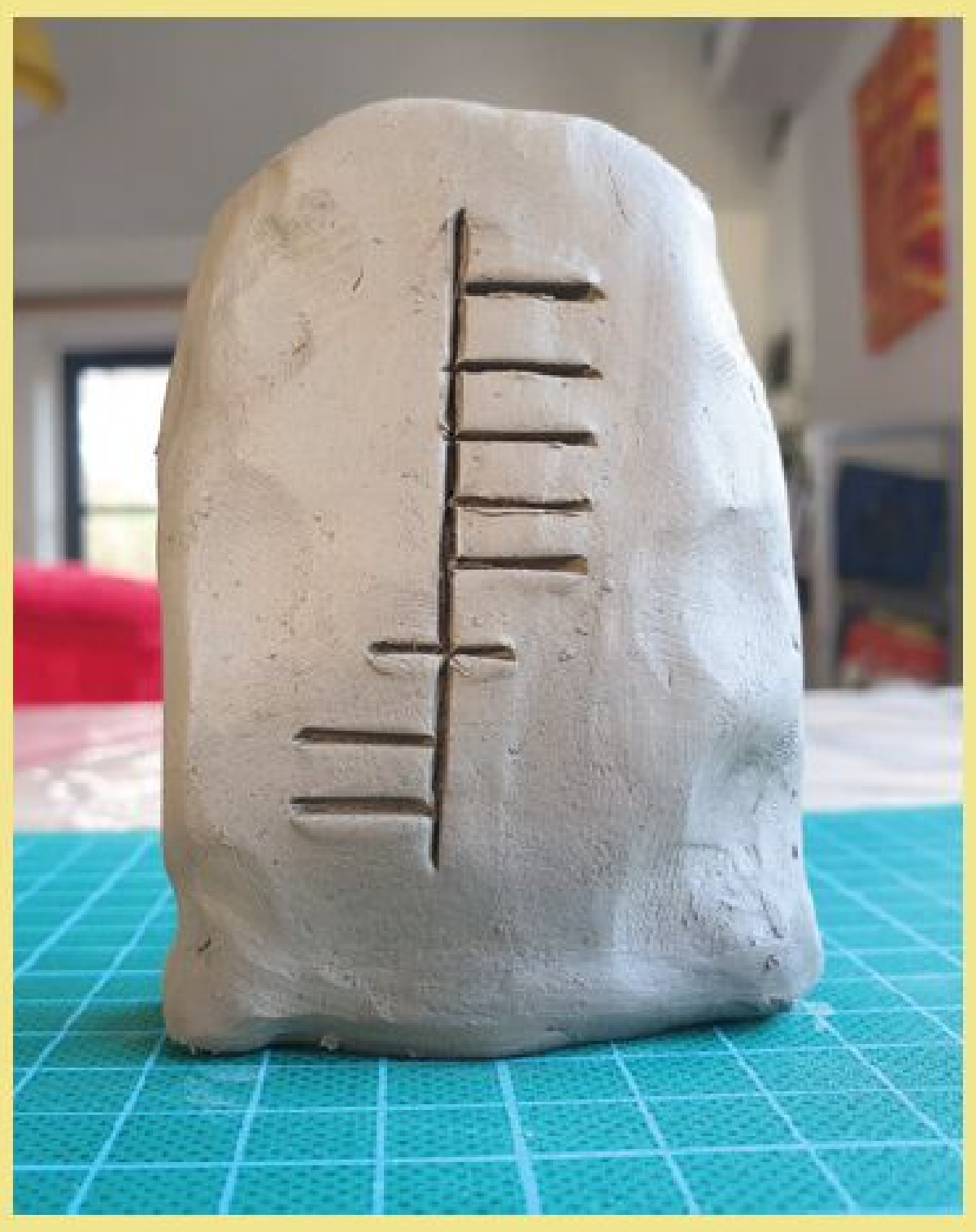
Activity suitable 8+

clwb archaeolegwyr ifanc
young archaeologists' club

Activity 2: Make your own ogham inscription

To make your own ogham inscription, you will need:

- Modelling material (air-drying clay or playdough works well)
- Craft board or a plastic sheet on your work surface – making things out of air-drying clay (or playdough) can be a bit messy
- Craft tools for making the inscription
- A little bit of water



Method

1

Warm up a lump of clay about as big as a golf ball.

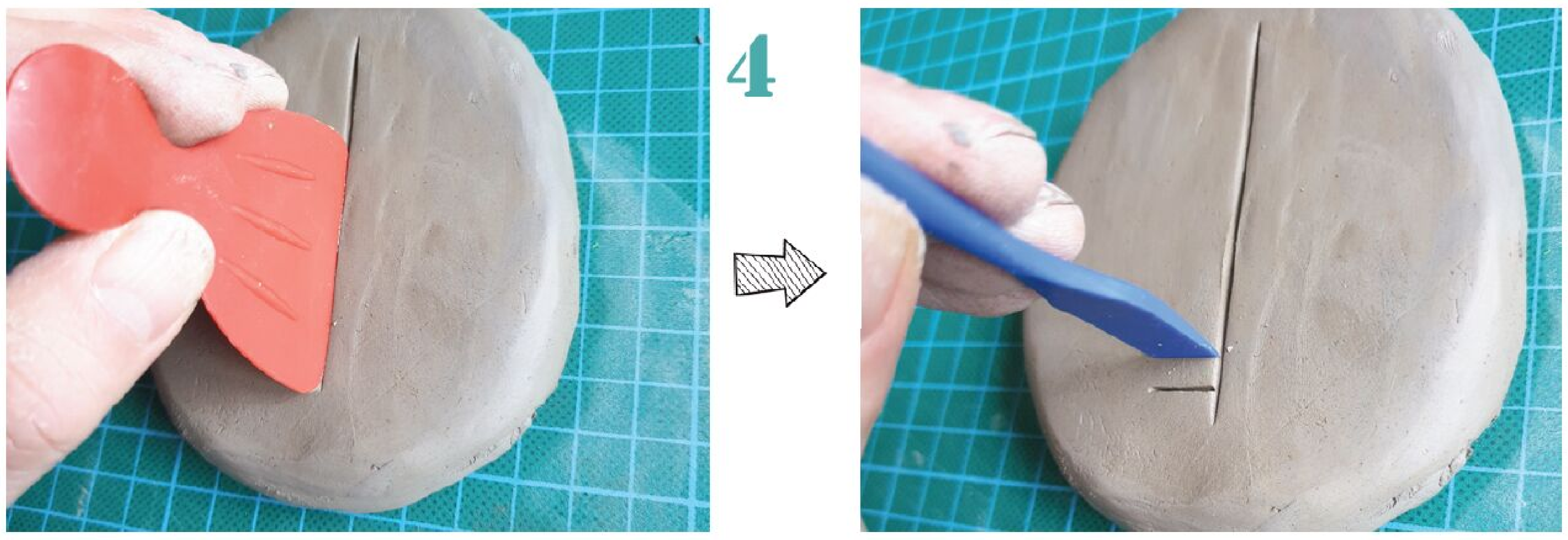
2

Make the clay into a short sausage shape.

3

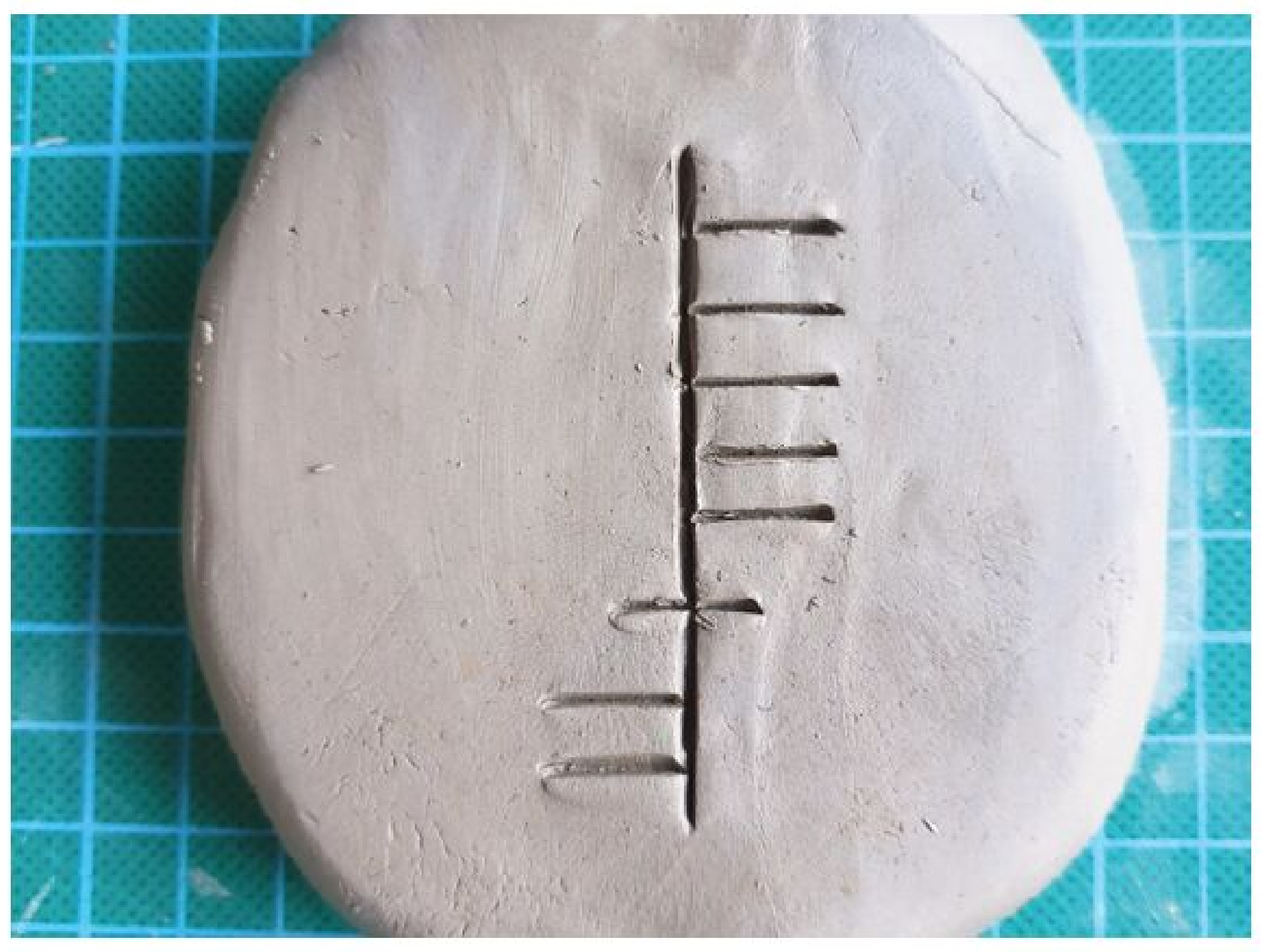
Flatten the clay. Our photo scale gives you a rough idea of how big our piece of flattened clay is.

4



Write your inscription in the clay.

5



Leave your modelling material to dry, perhaps on a piece of kitchen roll. It will take two or three days to dry. Best not to leave it near a radiator (the clay or playdough might crack).

ALL PHOTOS HENEB: GWYNEDD ARCHAEOLOGY

BONUS ACTIVITY: You could try shaping a piece of clay into a stone which stands upright, like the example at the top of this page

Dr Chloë Duckworth, reader in Archaeological Science & Public Engagement, Newcastle University, asks:

"Could we do more with what we already have?"

Every year in late September, a new group of first-year university students crowd into my classroom and sit down, waiting for me to deliver the opening lecture in our imaginatively-titled course, 'Introduction to Archaeology'.

They arrive with a mixed bag of preconceptions about the subject, their interest on a spectrum from 'archaeology is my lifelong passion' to 'I needed the credits and beginner's philosophy was full'.

Regardless of background and expectations, people are often surprised by the prominence of archaeological survey in the programme. We do not even begin to look at excavation until the third week, by which time there are usually dark mutterings among the students about whether I'm planning on teaching it at all.

Suspicions that I either don't like digging or don't know how to do it are confirmed when we begin our discussion with a large, red sign that reads, 'EXCAVATION IS DESTRUCTION', but underneath the stunt there is a serious point.

What I want the students to understand is that when we dig, we destroy the archaeological context of the finds, which can only now be glimpsed in the records we make and the publications they lead to.

Buried archaeology is a finite resource, and there is a growing conflict between an archaeologist's pursuit of information about the past, and their responsibility to protect what lies in the ground for future generations.

Research excavations, community projects and student field schools all face this conundrum, as well as the associated challenge of conserving and storing anything they do dig up.

Can technology provide the answer? Non-destructive survey methods such as geophysics and aerial photography have been a core part of archaeological practice for decades, while more recent developments in the use of satellite and LiDAR imagery have had transformative effects on our ability to identify ancient sites and features.

CBA

What is more, they have done so without losing the thrill of discovery that has always been associated with digging, becoming the focus of important citizen science projects.

Enter 'Big Data'. The term refers to very large or complex data sets, that can only be tackled thanks to recent advances in computing software and processing power. I spoke with Lu Stanton-Greenwood, an archaeological researcher and current MSc student at the University of Aberdeen who also has over a decade of professional experience of data management in the financial sector.

"Big data basically means what it says on the tin," she explains. "Archaeology has a lot of data, and it comes from diverse sources like GIS, geophysical surveys, photographs, artefacts, stratigraphy and so on.

"Imagine that it's all heading off by conveyor belt to be stored in a warehouse. Big Data is a way of making the conveyor belt as smooth as possible. It creates little structures along the way to organise the data so that, by the time it gets to the warehouse, it can be sorted into boxes that make sense to humans trying to read it. And of course, all those boxes can 'speak' to each other, even if they have wildly different contents."

If you ask an individual archaeologist or company, they will say, 'well, my data isn't big,' but if we took archaeology as a whole – even just in the UK – that's a huge amount.

Right now, it's all in different silos depending on which company or university or lab generated it, but imagine if you could take all that data and access it, and cross-reference it. Imagine what you could ask of it and how much time it would save.

My mind wanders to another lecture on our first-year course. Throughout the early twentieth century, we learn, archaeologists were largely preoccupied with identifying and categorising artefacts, attempting to link the products of one cultural group or region with those of another, working out which came first and who influenced whom, but the advent of carbon dating changed all that.

The newfound ability to anchor the sequence of events at even prehistoric sites to actual calendar dates freed archaeologists up to begin asking not just 'when' and 'where', but 'why', and 'how'.

Can we imagine a future where the labour of piecing together disparate archives and records is handled for us, and we are freed to investigate the more interesting questions?

Lu points me to Sweden's Historiska database, the result of a monumental effort to achieve just that. Closer to home, the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) in York has been active in developing more seamless approaches to data archiving, that cut across institutional differences and the dreaded silos.

Perhaps a unified archaeology data pool is not a pipe dream after all. If it can be achieved, it would open the doors to discovering so much more about our past, and it could do so by weaponising the information we already have. It might need a bit of an image change before we start any citizen science projects, though.

"I think that a lot of people associate data with maths and find that off-putting," shrugs Lu. "It's a shame though because data is everywhere, and it's really a conversation.

"We are all producing and consuming data every day, and you can do both of those without all the standard deviations and stuff that we use to analyse it. Although obviously you are welcome to access those if you're a massive nerd," she chuckles, "like me." ■

This page: John Samways doing Geophys at Chedworth Roman Villa in 2023

udig

WHAT WILL YOU DISCOVER

Udig: Stanwick Hall

AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Udig is offering places on this exciting and fully immersive research training excavation at a multi-phase Saxon-to-late-post-medieval site. Your experience as part of the team will involve a 'hands-on' approach to learning all the basics from initial non-intrusive earthwork survey by EDM and GPS, geophysical survey using fluxgate gradiometer (magnetometry), single/multi-probe array (resistivity) and all on-site archaeological excavation processes through to post-excavation. This will involve getting your hands dirty in the trenches, discovering and identifying finds, drawing and photography – in addition to helping to clean and record all finds from the excavation. With your help, we will also produce an end of season report on your findings, published for all to read.

LIVE AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

Live as an archaeologist and as well as free on-site camping, we'll provide three meals a day and inspiring speakers on a whole range of archaeological topics. A limited number of hotel rooms will be available for rental, as well as a beautiful on-site cottage with two en-suite double-bedrooms. Showers and toilets are supplied for all campers.

WE WANT YOU

The dig is running from May to September 2025 and you can choose from a variety of daily, weekly or 2-day packages. We want enthusiasts of all ages and participants aged 8+ can attend. This exciting offer is open to all from home and abroad.

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Catherine's College
Merton College Sports Ground
Stonehenge
Tumulus
Tumuli
Stone (Friar's Heel)
Slaughtering Stone
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